
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

FRIDAY, 11th MARCH, 1927

Vol. IX—No. 34

OFFICIAL REPORT



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DELHI
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS
1927

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 11th March, 1927.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

RIGHT OF JUDICIAL APPEAL ENJOYED BY EUROPEAN BRITISH SUBJECTS FROM THE INDIAN COURTS.

841. ***Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan:** Will Government please state if the Imperial Government contemplate to make any change in the right of judicial appeal at present enjoyed by the Britishers from the Indian Courts?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: Government have no information on the subject.

APPOINTMENT OF VAKILS AS CHIEF JUSTICES OF HIGH COURTS.

842. ***Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan:** Is it a fact that under section 101 of the Government of India Act Vakils and Pleaders of the High Courts are debarred from being made permanent as Chief Justice and that the Secretary of State for India proposes to make an amendment in it, so as to remove this disability? If so, what progress has been made in this direction?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: Sub-section (4) of section 101 of the Government of India Act has been interpreted to mean that the permanent appointment of Chief Justices of High Courts is confined to barristers and advocates referred to in clause (a) of sub-section (3) of that section. The question of amending the law so as to make Vakils and Pleaders eligible for such appointment has been referred to the Secretary of State, but it is uncertain when legislation will be undertaken.

Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan: When will legislation be undertaken?

Mr. President: It is uncertain, the Honourable the Home Member has just said.

Mr. B. Das: Sir, is it not a fact that the late Justice Sir Chandra Madhab Ghose of Calcutta was made Chief Justice of that High Court?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: I think he was an Acting Chief Justice.

TOTAL PAYMENTS MADE TO THE CONSULTING ENGINEER TO THE STATE RAILWAYS DURING 1925-26.

843. ***Mr. T. C. Goswami:** (a) Will Government please state the total amount of money paid to the Consulting Engineer to the State Railways on all accounts during 1925-26?

(b) Are Messrs. Rendel, Palmer and Tretton the Consulting Engineers? When were they appointed?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the reply given by me on the 15th February 1927, to part (a) of question No. 408, asked by Diwan Chaman Lall.

(b) Yes. Since 1881, when Sir Alexander Rendel, personally, was appointed Consulting Engineer to the Secretary of State. The personal appointment was altered to the appointment of the firm as such in 1914.

SINDHIS AND NON-SINDHIS EMPLOYED ON THE NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

844. ***Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas:** Will Government be pleased:

(a) to give details of non-Sindhis serving in Sind and Sindhis serving in the Punjab and the United Provinces on the North Western Railway?

(b) to state how far the policy of localising Punjabis in the Punjab and Sindhis in Sind has been carried out and how far it remains to be carried out still?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) Government have no information.

(b) Government have no intention of localising all Punjabis in the Punjab and Sindhis in Sind. Government is following a policy of preventing undue preponderance of any one community or class in the Railway Services, but appointments are open to residents of all parts of the country alike. In this connection I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply given to questions Nos. 275—278 asked by Khan Bahadur W. M. Hussanally on the 31st August 1926.

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh: Sir, is it enough to say that Government have no information? Should they not say they will collect information and give it to the House?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: No, Sir, I do not think it is necessary to collect this information.

DIFFICULTIES OF SINDHI EMPLOYEES OF THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY SERVING IN THE PUNJAB AND THE UNITED PROVINCES.

845. ***Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas:** (a) Are Government aware of the difficulties and troubles to which Sindhis serving in the Punjab and the United Provinces are subjected from social, educational and economic points of view?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether any complaints of this nature have been received by the railway authorities and what action they have taken or propose to take in the matter?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) No.

(b) Government have no information whether any complaints have been made to the local railway authorities.

REDUCTION OF THE GRANT TO THE AITCHISON COLLEGE.

846. ***Lieut.-Sardar Muhammad Nawaz Khan:** (a) Is it a fact that lately the Government of India have reduced the grant to the Aitchison College?

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, will Government please state the reasons for this reduction?

Mr. E. B. Howell: (a) Yes.

(b) In consequence of the recommendation made by the Inchcape Retrenchment Committee on page 192 of their Report.

AGENCY HELD BY MESSRS. W. W. HOWARD BROTHERS, LONDON, FOR
THE SALE OF INDIAN TIMBER IN EUROPE.

847. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state how long Messrs. W. W. Howard Brothers, London, acted as their agents for the sale of Indian timber in Europe? What were the terms of the contract of the agency?

(b) What was the total quantity and price of timber sold each year through their agency and the total amount charged by them as commission every year during the period of the agency?

(c) Will Government be pleased to give the following details in regard to the sale of timber in Europe in 1925-26 through this same agency:

Names of countries in Europe showing the kind and quantity of timber purchased by each with the total amount for each kind of timber paid as its price?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: (a) From January 1st, 1919, to December 31st, 1926. A statement giving the terms of the agency is laid on the table.

I may mention that Messrs. Howard Bros were also the agents of some Provincial Governments.

(b) It would involve a considerable amount of labour to compile for each year the information desired, but the total quantity of timber belonging to the Central Government shipped up to the 31st March 1925, was 9,880 tons out of which 6,500 tons were sold by the agents. The total gross sale proceeds of the timber shipped amounted to Rs. 14,91,112 of which charges in connection with rent, commission, sawing charges, and other miscellaneous charges amounted to Rs. 7,54,168. The net sale proceeds up to the 31st March 1925 amounted therefore to Rs. 7,36,944. Information in respect of the period from 1st April 1925 to 31st December 1926 is not available at present.

(c) The information asked for is not available

"Terms of the agency held by Messrs. W. W. Howard Brothers, London, for the sale of Indian timbers in Europe were:

- (i) Agents to tender and contract for orders for Indian timbers at prices and on terms for delivery which appeared to be most profitable according to current directions and instructions and which were, in their opinion, in the best interests of the Principal;
- (ii) All prices quoted by the Principal to the agents to be c.i.f. at port of discharge;

- (iii) All charges for storage and labour, incidental to stacking and moving, to be according to the Port of London Authority's Regulations, London Charge Schedule, and, to be added to the sale price and collected by the agents;
- (iv) The agents to guarantee the due performance by the buyers of all contracts;
- (v) The agent's remuneration to be fixed at five per cent. on the sale price calculated at c.i.f. rates, or at the delivered price of the contract as rendered and such remuneration included brokerage and *del credere*;
- (vi) Specification of stocks to be rendered by the agents every six months, or oftener, as required;
- (vii) Detailed accounts of all disbursements and collections to be rendered quarterly, and agents to pay over all sums as directed by Government;
- (viii) Provision for the inspection of books and for audit, and
- (ix) Agreement to continue until determined by either party at any time by one year's previous notice to the other.

Mr. M. S. Aney: Will the Honourable Member undertake to supply the information later on?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: Does that refer to part (c)?

Mr. M. S. Aney: Yes.

Mr. J. W. Bhore: I am afraid that information will probably not be available in the office of the High Commissioner.

APPOINTMENT OF AN INDIAN FIRM AS AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF INDIAN TIMBER IN EUROPE.

848. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** Will Government be pleased to say whether there are any Indian firms in India or Burma dealing in the export of timber from India or Burma to various countries in Europe, Asia and America and, if so, will the Government be pleased to say whether they propose to take any steps to appoint any such Indian firm as their agents for sales of their Indian timbers in Europe after the expiry of the period of 12 months for which Sir Peter Clutterbuck has been appointed as Timber Adviser to the High Commissioner for India?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: Government are aware that there are firms in India and Burma which export timber. When the position in regard to marketing abroad timber belonging to the Central Government is reviewed towards the end of the present year, the possibility of employing suitable Indian firms will no doubt be given due consideration if it is decided to give the agency to a firm.

ORDERS FOR MAP RACKS FOR THE MAP RECORD AND ISSUE OFFICE OF THE SURVEY OF INDIA.

849. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state with what manufacturing firms in India, if any, orders for closed steel-racks for storing maps in the Map Record and Issue Office of the Survey of India were placed and for what amount in each of the following years, 1923-24, 1924-25, 1925-26, 1926-27?

(b) If not, will Government be pleased to give the reasons for not doing so; and will Government be pleased to name the foreign Firms with which and the amount for which orders for the aforesaid steel-racks were placed in each of the above-mentioned years?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: (a) Orders were placed with Messrs. The Steel Products Company for Rs. 41,562 in 1923-24, Rs. 20,000 in 1924-25, Rs. 9,974 in 1925-26 and Rs. 10,800 in 1926-27 and with The Julius Manufacturing Company for Rs. 10,000 in 1924-25.

(b) The first part of the question does not arise. No orders were placed with foreign firms.

RECRUITMENT OF INDIAN LABOURERS FOR THE NAVAL BASE AT SINGAPORE.

850. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** 1. Will Government be pleased to state the number of labourers who emigrated from Madras Presidency to Malaya on account of the construction of the Naval Base at Singapore during the years 1923-24, 1924-25, 1925-26 and 1926-27?

2. Will Government be pleased to state what conditions, if any, the Government of India have imposed on the authorities in Malaya responsible for the construction of the Naval Base at Singapore in the interest of labourers emigrating there from India?

3. Will Government be pleased to state what steps are being taken by the Agent to the Governor General in Malaya for adequate supervision of the moral and material condition of the labourers emigrated from India?

4. Will the Government be pleased to say what special facilities are given either by the Government of Malaya or the authorities responsible for the construction of the Naval Base at Singapore to attract Indian labour?

5. (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether there was any correspondence between the Government of India and the Admiralty Office in the United Kingdom through the Secretary of State for India for the supply of Indian labour for the Naval Base at Singapore?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to publish the same?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: 1. These labourers are engaged locally in Malaya and not in Madras. According to the information in the possession of the Government of India the number of Indian labourers employed on the Naval Base on the 17th February 1926 was 605 of whom 30 were skilled and the rest unskilled.

2. The conditions approved by both Houses of the Indian Legislature in respect of unskilled labourers recruited in India for employment in Malaya apply also to unskilled labourers recruited in Malaya for the Naval Base. A copy of the notification containing these terms and conditions has been placed in the Library of the House for the Honourable Member's information.

3. The Agent of the Government of India in British Malaya has the same duties towards this class of labourers as towards other unskilled labourers working in Malaya. These are detailed in rule 56 of the Indian Emigration Rules, 1923.

4. The Government of India have no information.

5. (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

ANNUAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF THE MANPUR PARGANA IN THE
CENTRAL INDIA AGENCY.

851. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** Will Government be pleased to state the annual income and expenditure of the Manpur Pargana in the Central India Agency?

Mr. E. B. Howell: The estimated income of the Manpur Pargana in the Central India Agency for 1927-28 is Rs. 60,000. The estimated expenditure for that year is Rs. 48,000 or, including expenditure on Roads by the Imperial Public Works Department, Rs. 53,000. These figures exclude any share in the pay of the Collector who is also District Magistrate and his staff.

ACTION TAKEN AGAINST OFFICIALS IN CONNECTION WITH LANDS TRANS-
FERRED TO THEM FROM BHIL CULTIVATORS IN THE MANPUR
PARGANA.

852. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** Will Government be pleased to state what steps the Agent to the Governor General in Central India had taken against the officials to whom or to whose friends land had been freely transferred from Bhil cultivators in the Manpur Pargana?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: As the result of enquiry the Sadar Kanungo in charge of the Manpur Pargana resigned and forfeited his claim to pension.

APPOINTMENT OF A TAHSILDAR IN MANPUR PARGANA.

853. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** Will Government be pleased to state the name, rank and salary of the Tahsildar whose services are going to be lent to the Agent to the Governor General in Central India by the Government of the Central Provinces?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: I regret that it is not yet possible to give the information asked for by the Honourable Member. Subject to the provision of funds by the Legislative Assembly the Government of India have sanctioned the appointment of a Tahsildar to hold charge of the Pargana. Steps will be taken to obtain a suitable officer from the Central Provinces.

ABOLITION OF THE OFFICE OF THE SADAR KANUNGO IN MANPUR
PARGANA.

854. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** Will Government be pleased to state whether the office of the Sadar Kanungo who performed the duties of a Tahsildar and Munsiff combined in Manpur Pargana is going to be altogether abolished after the appointment of a Tahsildar on Rs. 1,620 per annum?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: Yes, Sir.

EXPENDITURE ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BUILDING FOR THE OFFICE
OF THE CONTROLLER OF MILITARY ACCOUNTS AT QUETTA.

855. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** Will Government be pleased to state the expenditure on the construction of the Military Accounts office building at

Mr. G. M. Young: I presume the Honourable Member is referring to the original Military Accounts Office at Quetta, which (with the exception of the servants' quarters) was constructed in 1916. The cost of these buildings was Rs. 52,908.

During 1917, 1918 and 1919 certain temporary offices were built alongside the main office to accommodate additional clerks. The cost of these temporary buildings was Rs. 22,244.

SURVEY OF INDIA BUILDINGS AT MUSSOORIE.

856. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state in what year the present Survey buildings at Mussoorie in which No. 2 Survey Party now constituted as "E" Company originally recessed, was built and what costs the Government incurred in building and maintaining the same in repairs till the end of the last financial year?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state how they propose to utilise the buildings at Mussoorie after the proposed purchase of the Controller of the Military Accounts Office from the Army Department by the Survey Department for use as their headquarters of "E" Company?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: (a) No. 2 Party now "E" Company was only one of the parties with headquarters in the Castle Hill Estate at Mussoorie. The Estate was purchased, not built, by Government in 1908 at a cost of Rs. 3,00,000. Prior to 1919-20 when the maintenance was in the hands of the Local Government figures of cost are not at present available. The total cost on works and repairs incurred for the Estate since 1919-20 up to the last financial year is reported to be about Rs. 1,20,061. Separate figures for the building occupied by No. 2 Party are not available.

(b) The building occupied by No. 2 Party is occupied now on re-arrangement by another party.

RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS FOR MILITARY OFFICERS AT QUETTA.

857. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** Will Government be pleased to state if the military authorities at Quetta have submitted their plans and estimates of residential quarters for their officers to the Head of the Military Engineering service for sanction and if so, will Government be pleased to place the same on the table for the information of this House?

Mr. G. M. Young: The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. The second part does not therefore arise. But I may say that Government is not prepared to lay plans and estimates of bungalows on the table of this House. If, however, the Honourable Member desires any particular information under this head, I shall be happy to give him privately what information I can.

ACQUISITION OF LAND IN THE AGROH GOVERNMENT FORESTS IN THE HAZARA DISTRICT.

858. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state when they first received the proposals for acquisition of land in the Agroh Government Forests in the Hazara District from the Chief Commissioner and Agent to the Governor General, North-West Frontier Province?

(b) Will Government be pleased to lay the following information on the table in regard to this proposal:

- (i) area of the land under cultivation in the Agror Forests proposed to be acquired for forests,
- (ii) annual rental to which the land is assessed,
- (iii) the kind of crop generally grown and the average annual gross income from the crops grown,
- (iv) the number of cultivators or tenants who own or cultivate this land as proprietors or tenants?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether the proposals for land acquisition in the above connection from the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province show the amount of compensation to the cultivators of the land in Agror Forests in money only or whether they indicate any intention on the part of that Government to give the cultivators other land of the same quality and area in some other neighbouring part of the Hazara District or any other neighbouring district of the same province in exchange for the land acquired by way of compensation? If so, in what district and what is the area of the land thus proposed to be given in exchange?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state whether the proposals of the Local Government make any provision for giving facilities to these cultivators for migrating to other places for settling there as cultivators such as building residential quarters, etc., in the other places? If so, what is the approximate amount the Local Government propose to allot for this purpose?

CREATION OF SMALL COLONIES OF CULTIVATORS IN FOREST AREAS IN THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE.

859. ***Mr. M. S. Aney:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Forest Department in the North-West Frontier Province has been following any settled plan of creating or maintaining small colonies of cultivators in the Forest areas on the lines of the Scheme of Settlement of Forest villages pursued by the Forest Department in some Forest areas of the Central Provinces and Berar?

(b) If the reply to above question be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to give reasons for not allowing the land to remain under cultivation in the Agror Forests and turning the same into forest village or forest villages as the case may be?

(c) Or if the reply be in the negative, will Government be pleased to explain why that scheme is not being tried or pursued by the Forest Department in the North-West Frontier Province?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: With your permission, Sir, I should like to reply to questions Nos. 858 and 859 together.

In November 1926 the Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, asked for a provision of Rs. 5,000 to be made in the Budget of 1927-28 for the acquisition of cultivated land not belonging to Government situated within the limits of the forests in question; but he submitted no

detailed acquisition proposals to Government as he is himself competent to take action under the Land Acquisition Act.

The information desired by the Honourable Member will, however, be obtained and furnished to him.

SUPPLY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA OF ELECTRIC ENERGY TO THE DELHI ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS AND LIGHTING COMPANY.

860. ***Mr. M. K. Acharya:** Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) whether they have entered, or propose to enter into any contract with the Delhi Electric Tramways and Lighting Co. to supply electric energy to them at cheap rates from the Kingsway Power House or elsewhere, and also to transfer to the Company the overhead wires and posts, etc.?
- (b) at what rate Government propose to supply electric energy to the above Company?
- (c) what rate the Company charges to its customers?
- (d) who will be the owners of the overhead wires, posts, coil, etc.?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) Yes.

(b) 0·8 annas per 1 Board of Trade unit for the total units supplied per annum *plus* an annual charge of Rs. 75 per Kilowatt of actual maximum demand during the year. Payments are to be made at these rates for not less than 1,000,000 Board of Trade units per annum in respect of units and for not less than 300 Kilowatts of maximum demand in respect of the additional charge based on the maximum demand even if less than that quantity is supplied.

(c) Annas 8 per Board of Trade unit for lighting and fan purposes and annas 3 per Board of Trade unit for power purposes subject to the discounts allowed by the Company from time to time.

(d) Such standards, mains and other equipment as may be required for the distribution of electrical energy in the area handed over by Government to the Company are to be sold to the Company at present market rates.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: May I know, Sir, why it is that Government have thought fit to transfer the supply of these services in New Delhi to a company and not run it themselves?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: There is nothing in the answer I have given to imply that the service has been transferred to the company. All we are doing is this: We are trying to enter into arrangements with the company for supplying them with our surplus electric energy.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: Am I to understand that this company has applied for electric power for its own purposes and not for the supply of electric power to other customers and the public?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: As a matter of fact it does supply energy to certain members of the public, and the energy which it will take from Government will undoubtedly be used for that purpose.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: Then I repeat my question, why is it that the Government have given away the power to supply energy to the public at its own rates from its own power house and handed it over to the company?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Because at the present moment it is the company which is supplying these customers. The Government have not been supplying those customers.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: Is there anything to prevent the Government supplying that energy to those customers?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: It is not usual for Government to undertake that function, Sir.

Mr. B. Das: May I inquire, Sir, if the charge of 0·8 annas per unit includes establishment charges and the interest on the capital, and whether this contract with the Delhi Electric Supply Company will not involve additional capital expenditure on the Government Power House?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: The answer, Sir, to the second part of the question is in the negative and to the first part in the affirmative.

Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy: May I ask, Sir, whether before the contract was given to this particular company tenders were invited?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: There was no question of tenders in this case. There was one particular company in existence in Delhi and all that we did was to arrange to transfer to it a portion of the surplus energy on suitable terms.

Mr. B. Das: May I inquire if Government have compared the rates given in the contract with those prevailing in Bombay charged by the Hydro-Electric and Andhra Valley Supply Companies and whether these do not supply electric energy for lighting at one anna six pies per unit, whereas Government are charging only 0·8 annas per unit here?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Sir, the question is too long for me to be able to answer on the spur of the moment. I shall be obliged if the Honourable Member will put it down on paper.

EXPENDITURE ON THE VISIT OF SIR NORMAN WALKER TO INDIA IN CONNECTION WITH MEDICAL EDUCATION.

861. ***Mr. M. K. Acharya:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) if Sir Norman Walker has come to India to examine and report on the state of medical education in this country?
- (b) if he has been deputed by the General Medical Council of Great Britain for this work or if his services have been requisitioned by the Government of India for regulating medical education in India?
- (c) if the expenses incurred by Sir Norman Walker are paid out of Indian revenues? What is the total amount spent for this purpose? Has Colonel Needham been deputed by the Government of India to assist Sir N. Walker in his work? If so, what is the amount to be charged to Indian Exchequer for this deputation?

Mr. J. W. Bhore: (a) Yes.

(b) He was deputed by the General Medical Council with the approval of the Government of India and Provincial Governments.

(c) Colonel Needham was deputed by the Government of India at the suggestion of the General Medical Council to assist Sir Norman Walker. The estimated cost of the tour of Sir Norman Walker and Colonel Needham is Rs. 33,080-7-5 which will be borne in equal proportions by the Governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the United Provinces, the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa and Burma.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: May I know, Sir, whether there is any other special job in contemplation for Colonel Needham when this one is over?

APPOINTMENT OF MR. T. G. RUSSELL AS PERMANENT AGENT OF THE
GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA RAILWAY.

862. ***Mr. M. K. Acharya:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) whether one Mr. T. G. Russell was a Deputy Agent of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway in December, 1925; and if so, on what pay?
- (b) whether he became officiating Agent of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, and if so, on what pay?
- (c) how old was he in 1926; and when was he appointed to the Railway Department?
- (d) how many senior Europeans and how many senior Indians have been superseded by Mr. Russell in being appointed officiating Agent?
- (e) whether it is proposed to appoint Mr. Russell as permanent Agent of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway after Sir R. McLean?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: (a) Mr. Russell was Deputy Agent, Great Indian Peninsula Railway, in December, 1925. His pay at the time was Rs. 1,850 per mensem.

(b) He was appointed to officiate as Agent, Great Indian Peninsula Railway, during the period Sir R. McLean was on leave in 1926. As Agent he drew Rs. 3,500 per mensem which is the pay of that post.

(c) He was 39 years of age on the 19th January, 1926. He was appointed on the 21st November, 1913, to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.

(d) No officer has a prescriptive claim to the post of Agent and no question of supersession therefore arises.

(e) Yes.

!APPOINTMENT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON REFORMS.

863. ***Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan:** (a) Will Government please state when the Royal Commission on Reforms is expected to be appointed and what would be its strength?

(b) Will it contain Indians as its members? If so, how many?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: I refer the Honourable Member to my reply to Maulvi Muhammad Yakub's starred question No. 45, dated the 27th January 1927.

Mr. K. C. Roy: May I ask, Sir, if it is not a fact that the Honourable Mr. Crerar, who was lately Secretary in the Home Department, is coming out and that he will be placed on special duty in connection with the Reforms Inquiry?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: I do not know whether that arises out of this question, but it is a fact that Mr. Crerar will be employed in the Home Department.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: May I know if Mr. Crerar will be placed on special duty in connection with the preparation of materials for the forthcoming Reforms Inquiry?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: My Honourable friend may take it from me that, subject to the natural obstinacy of Mr. Crerar's disposition, he will perform in my department such duties as I assign to him.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: I have not got an answer to my question, which is whether the Honourable Mr. Crerar will be placed on special duty for the purpose of preparing material for the Reforms Inquiry?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: My Honourable friend will get no further answer from me. Mr. Crerar will be employed on such duties as I may assign to him.

Mr. K. Ahmed: Do Government propose to take instructions from the Secretary of the Swaraj Party in the matter? (Laughter.)

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: I am sure the Government will profit if they do so; but so far as I am concerned, may I know whether the duties assigned include these duties?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: It is possible that some of the duties that I assign to him may include that.

Mr. K. C. Roy: Has the attention of the Honourable the Home Member been drawn to a conference held at Patiala consisting of Princes and Ministers to consider the position of Princes in connection with the coming Reforms Inquiry?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: My attention has not been drawn to it; I read something about it in the newspapers.

GRANTS FROM THE FINE FUND OF THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY TO EUROPEAN AND INDIAN SCHOOLS.

864. ***Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan:** (a) Will Government please state if it is a fact that the East Indian Railway makes grants to schools for the education of the children of its employees from its "Fine Fund"?

(b) What amounts have been realized from the Indians and the Europeans separately towards this Fine Fund in the year 1925-26?

(c) What is the ratio between the Indian and the non-Indian employees in the East Indian Railway?

(d) Is it a fact that Resolution No. 481 at page 661 of the minutes of official meeting of East Indian Railway officers on 22nd September, 1926, held at Calcutta, shows that Rs. 42,000 has been granted for European schools while Rs. 15,000 only for the Indian schools?

(e) If the amount quoted in (d) be correct, will Government please state the reasons for this racial distinction, or if not correct, will they give the correct figures?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) Yes.

(b) The information regarding the fines realised from employees belonging to different communities is not easily available and Government do not propose to collect it.

(c) The Honourable Member is referred to Appendix C of Volume II of the Railway Board's Report for 1925-26.

(d) and (e). We do not get copies of the proceedings of official meetings held by railways.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I know why Government do not consider it proper to get the information required?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: It in any case represents a very small proportion of the expenditure of railways on education; and the Honourable Member is probably not aware that at the moment we have an officer gone into the whole question of the assistance to be given by railways to the education of the children of their employes, both Indian and European.

WATCH AND WARD DEPARTMENT FOR STATE RAILWAYS.

865. ***Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan:** Will Government please state:

(a) the purpose for which the "Watch and Ward" Department has been established in the State-owned Railways and the amount annually spent over it?

(b) the number of such employees under this department in the State Railways who have been fined, suspended, dismissed or in any way punished departmentally or sentenced in any criminal court for offences relating to theft or illegal removal of properties from railway goods sheds or stations?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) The Watch and Ward Department was inaugurated as a result of the recommendations made by the Railway Police Committee, 1921, to guard against theft and pilferage of goods entrusted to Railways for transportation as well as of stores belonging to the railways. As regards the annual cost of Police Department (Watch and Ward Department) and contingent charges on State-worked railways I would refer the Honourable Member to the figures shown on page 6 of Eastern Bengal, East Indian and North Western Railways books of estimates and page 5 of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway book which were circulated to the Members of the Assembly at the time of the presentation of the Railway Budget on the 18th February last. Information in respect of the Watch and Ward Department is not separately available for State Railways worked by companies where the

total charges of "Watch and Ward" and Contribution for "Crime and Order" are also shown together in the books of these railways.

(5) Government have no information.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: May I inquire, Sir, whether the institution of this Watch and Ward Department has reduced the number of thefts and pilfering?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Yes, Sir.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: To what extent?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I cannot give exact figures, but the result has been that the reduction in the claims which railways have had to meet in respect of compensation for loss of goods by theft has been very marked on all railways, and particularly on the East Indian Railway.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: May I ask the Honorable Member to prepare a statement and lay it on the table?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I will send the Honorable Member such a statement if he wishes to have one, but I do not think it necessary to lay it on the table. The figures have, I believe, been published in reports of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. E. Ahmed: In view of the fact, Sir, that the question has been asked again and again in this Assembly since 1923 regarding thefts and pilfering by the coolies and clerks connected with the Watch and Ward Department of the goods trains and at the stations, especially at the stations for coal and iron-ore and the East Indian Railway, does the Watch and Ward Department take the necessary steps to curb this kind of thefts and pilfering which may be minimized?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I am sorry to hear about this. I believe that the Watch and Ward Department has taken every step.

House adjourns till 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 17th March 1927.

MR. KHAN BAHADUR SARFARAZ HUSAIN KHAN: Will the Government please make inquiry from the railway department and report to the 24th March 1927, whether the railway department has taken any steps to curb the question of the pilfering by the coolies and clerks at the stations for coal and iron-ore?

THE HONORABLE SIR RAOUL BLACKETT: I am sorry to hear about this. I believe that the Watch and Ward Department has taken every step.

THE HONORABLE SIR RAOUL BLACKETT: Copies of the replies have been placed in the Library.

(1) The replies are still under the consideration of the Government.

MR. KHAN BAHADUR SARFARAZ HUSAIN KHAN: When will they be completed?

THE HONORABLE SIR RAOUL BLACKETT: Did the Honorable Member ask me when will Government come to a decision? I think the answer must be in the future.

House adjourns till 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 17th March 1927.

MR. KHAN BAHADUR SARFARAZ HUSAIN KHAN: The Government propose to introduce legislation in the present Session on the question of the introduction of the shift system in Indian mines.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: The answer is in the affirmative.

INDIAN RAILWAYS AND INDIAN STATE RAILWAYS

MR. JAMNADAS M. MEHTA: (a) Is it a fact that the Great Indian Peninsula Railway has decided to employ the Indian staff that they will be paid the same rates as the Indian staff from 1st September, 1919?

(b) Is it a fact that the Government has stated that the Indian staff will be given full benefit of the Fundamental Labour Bill?

(c) Is it a fact that the Government has not yet decided, but in the meantime will let the Anglo-Indians and Europeans staff be moved?

(d) Is it a fact that the Government has sent to the late Mr. L. S. Parsons, General Manager, G.I.P. Railway, a statement that the whole question of Railway Leave Bill will be under consideration?

(e) Will the Government be pleased to state when they hope to introduce the Bill?

MR. A. A. L. PARSONS: (a), (b) and (c). The Honourable Member is referred to the reply given to a similar question asked by Dr. Jadhavji in the House on the 18th February, 1924.

(d) Yes.

(e). It is hoped the new rules will be got out before the end of 1927.

GOVERNMENT HOPE SCHEME FOR STATE RAILWAYS

MR. JAMNADAS M. MEHTA: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Working Hours Scheme for the Indian State railways was unanimously approved by the Chief Auditors of the State Railways?

(b) If the answer be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state the reasons for disappointing the scheme?

MR. A. A. L. PARSONS: The scheme was approved by all Chief Auditors except the Chief Auditor, Great Indian Peninsula Railway, who did not give any opinion on the matter officially. It is understood, however, that his personal opinion was that it was too early to start it.

TOTAL MILEAGE OF THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY, ET.

MR. C. S. RANGA IYER: (a) Will the Government be pleased to state what the total mileage of the amalgamated East Indian Railway is together with its branches and the lines worked by it?

(b) What mileage does the East Indian Railway cover in each of the Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Bihar proper and Bengal, respectively?

(c) How many Indian Officers and Inspectors in its different Departments were in the service of the East Indian Railway before its amalgamation with the Oudh and Bikaner Railway and how many of them were inhabitants of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and Bihar, respectively?

(d) How many members of the clerical staff in the different head offices of the East Indian Railway before its amalgamation with the Oudh

and Rohilkhand Railway) drawing Rs. 100 and above as their salaries were inhabitants of the United Provinces and Bihar, respectively."

"Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) The total mileage on 1st March, 1926 was 2,915 miles.

(b) Agra and Oudh 2,378 miles.

Bihar 557 miles.

Bengal 370 miles.

(c) and (d) The information is not available.

GRANT OF AN ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCE TO THE CHIEF CLERK OF THE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CLERK, MANAGER, EAST
INDIAN RAILWAY.

871. *Mr. C. B. Ranga Iyer: Is it not the duty of the
Manager of the East Indian Railway to provide for the
Calcutta?

(b) How many employees of the railway are there among the clerical staff now posted at Calcutta? How many of them are now at work?

(c) Is it a fact that the
percentage of the 15 per cent of the
East Indian Railway staff?

(d) What is the salary of the
at the staff?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The salary of the
at the staff is Rs. 1,000 per month.

(e) Is it a fact that the
percentage of the 15 per cent of the
East Indian Railway staff?

(f) Is it a fact that the
percentage of the 15 per cent of the
East Indian Railway staff?

(g) Is it a fact that the
percentage of the 15 per cent of the
East Indian Railway staff?

(h) Is it a fact that the
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East Indian Railway staff?

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(o) Is it a fact that the
percentage of the 15 per cent of the
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(p) Is it a fact that the
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East Indian Railway staff?

Mr. C. B. Bange: I have a question to ask the Minister.

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Agent, East Indian Railway, to let the Coaching Branch remain at Lucknow the Railway Board in December, 1925, informed them through the Chief Auditor that the question of transferring the Coaching Audit Office from Lucknow to Calcutta was not under consideration? What then led the authorities to shift the Deputy Chief Accounts Officers' Office, Lucknow, a few months after?

AGREEMENTS WITH EMPLOYEES OF THE OUDH AND ROHILKHAND
RAILWAY TO SERVE WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THAT RAILWAY.

877. ***Mr. G. S. Ranga Iyer:** Is it a fact that the employees of the Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway who worked only within the Provinces of Agra and Oudh were employed on the basis of local service and that they had executed agreements that they would serve within the jurisdiction of the Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: With your permission, Sir, I propose to reply to questions 872 to 877 together.

The information asked for would involve considerable time and trouble in collection and I trust the Honourable Member will recognise that the results are unlikely to be commensurate with the labour involved.

BILLS PASSED BY THE COUNCIL OF STATE LAID ON THE
TABLE.

Secretary of the Assembly: Sir, in accordance with Rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table the following Bills which were passed by the Council of State at its meeting of the 10th February, 1927. They are:

1. A Bill further to amend the Sea Customs Act, 1878, for a certain purpose.
2. A Bill to amend certain enactments and to repeal certain other enactments.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL OF STATE.

Secretary of the Assembly: Sir, the following Message was received from the Secretary of the Council of State to the Secretary of the Legislative Assembly:

"I am directed to inform you that the Bill further to amend the Indian Limitation Act, 1908, for a certain purpose, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on the 7th February 1927, was passed by the Council of State at its meeting on the 10th March 1927, with the following amendments:

'In sub-clause (1) of clause 1, for the word 'Amendment' the words 'Second Amendment' were substituted.'

'In clause 2—

- (i) after the figures '182', the letter and brackets '(a)' were inserted; and
- (ii) after the words 'shall be substituted' the following was added, namely:
'and

(b) for clause 6 of the same entry the following shall be substituted, namely:

- '6. (in respect of any amount, recovered by execution of the decree or order, which the decree-holder has been directed to refund by a decree passed

in a suit for such refund) the date of such last-mentioned decree or, in the case of an appeal therefrom, the date of the final decree of the Appellate Court or of the withdrawal of the appeal'.

The Council of State requests the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly in the amendments."

Sir, I lay on the table the Bill as amended by the Council of State.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman (Leader of the House): With your permission, Sir, I propose to make a statement in regard to the probable course of Government business during next week.

As Honourable Members are already aware, Monday, the 14th, and Tuesday, the 15th, have been allotted for the discussion of the Demands for Grants.

On Wednesday, the 16th, a motion will first be made that the House do proceed to elect members to the Standing Finance Committee for the year 1927-28. The next business will be the resumption of any motion which may have been begun and not concluded at to-morrow's sitting. Thereafter the Resolution of which I have given notice relating to the recent strengthening of the Judicial Committee of His Majesty's Privy Council for the purpose of hearing Indian Appeals will be taken. This will be followed by any business on to-morrow's list which is not reached to-morrow. Thereafter the Resolution regarding the recommendations of the International Labour Conference will be taken.

Thursday and Friday, the 17th and 18th, are gazetted holidays and the House will not meet on those days.

On Saturday, the 19th, subject to your direction, Sir, that the House will sit on that day, a motion will be made for the introduction of a Bill to amend section 96 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, for the purpose of giving effect to a proposal of the Civil Justice Committee. Government hope also to be in a position to introduce two more Bills, one further to amend the Indian Divorce Act for the purpose of enabling the appointment of an officer to act as King's Proctor in matrimonial causes to which that Act applies and the other to amend the Indian Bar Councils Act, 1926, for the purpose of providing for the seniority and pre-audience *inter se* of advocates of High Courts to which that Act will apply. Thereafter the Resolution, of which the Honourable the Finance Member has given notice in connection with the proposed removal of the export duty on tea, will be moved. On the completion of this business we propose to proceed with any business which may remain outstanding from the List of Business for Wednesday, the 16th, and, if time permits, to take into consideration the Sea Customs (Amendment) Bill which has been passed by the Council of State together with an amendment to the Indian Limitation Bill which has been made in the other House. Thereafter a motion will be made for the circulation, for the purpose of eliciting public opinion, of the Indian Mines (Amendment) Bill which is to be introduced on Saturday next. It is also proposed to take into consideration the Repealing and Amending Bill which has been passed by the Council of State. The House will readily understand that, owing to the congested condition of Government business as indicated by this statement it is still not possible

[Sir Alexander Muddiman.]

to make any more definite announcement about the allotment of time for non-official business than was made in my statement of last week.

Sir Hari Singh Gour (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhamadan): Sir, may I beg to inquire if the Honourable Member will be pleased to state whether the 25th, which was provisionally allotted for the disposal of non-official Bills, has not yet been decided upon to be finally fixed for that purpose?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman: If my Honourable friend had heard the last paragraph of the statement I have just made, he would have gathered that no such decision is possible and indeed unless Government business is proceeded with rather more rapidly than it has been proceeded with for the last few days, it seems extremely unlikely that any such proposal can be entertained.

THE GENERAL BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS—*contd.*

SECOND STAGE—*contd.*

Expenditure from Revenue—contd.

DEMAND NO 23—INDIAN POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT—*contd.*

Low Salaries of Postal Clerks, Peons and Subordinate Services and Inadequate Pensions of Subordinate Retired Officers.

Mr. President: The House will now resume discussion on the amendment of Mr Prakasam on the Demand under the head 'Indian Postal and Telegraph Department'.

Sir Darcy Lindsay (Bengal: European): Sir, while I am in sympathy with the views of the Honourable Members who have spoken on this subject with regard to bringing about an improvement in the conditions of the subordinate staff of the Post and Telegraph Department wherever possible, I feel that it is perhaps unfortunate that these discussions should take place in the House for they must be very unsettling to the labour and seriously handicap the Honourable Member in charge in his endeavours to bring about an improvement of the conditions. We have it, Sir, on the authority of my Honourable friend, Mr. Kelkar, that the Honourable Member in charge has done a great deal in the past year to bring about improvements. We also know that a large sum of money is provided in next year's Budget for further improvements, and I feel that the House ought to leave it to the Honourable Member, whose kindness of heart we all appreciate, to do what he can to improve the conditions of these men. Of course, Sir, the great question is where is the money to come from. We have it that the surplus on the Post Offices amounts to something like 8 lakhs of rupees whilst there is a deficit on the Telegraphs and Telephones. That deficit is merely an incident. There may be a profit next year or in years to come as the telephone system improves and more subscribers are taken in. (Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: "Why not separate the two?") I will leave that to the Department to do. And, Sir, we are told by my Honourable friend, Diwan Chaman Lall, that he knows of cases—he quoted the case of a postman in Bombay who was receiving, I think, Rs. 45 a month and a very carefully prepared budget showed that his monthly

expenditure was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Rs. 78. By this showing and if others are in a similar position, it means that the increase in wages should be in the neighbourhood of 75 per cent. We all know that the wages bill for the Post and Telegraph Department runs into crores of rupees, and if my Honourable friend, Diwan Chaman Lall's views were to be met, it would be a huge sum for the finances of India to produce. On the other hand, Sir, we have demands from many Members of the House for a reduction in postal rates. I believe the very Mover of the amendment now under discussion has tabled an amendment for a reduction in postal rates that will entail a loss to revenue of something approaching a crore and a half of rupees. Here we want to give on the one hand and take away on the other. And as I say, where is the money to come from? I would put it to the House, Sir, that we would be well advised to decide once and for all whether we want the position of the men improved or whether we want cheaper rates. We certainly cannot have both. And I ask the House not to press upon Government these reductions in postal rates. I for one would prefer the condition of the men to be improved. I am quite sure, Sir, that with this sword hanging over the head of the Honourable Member in charge which may fall any day and lop off an ear in the way of reduced postal rates, he is not free to do what he would desire in the interests of the men. Every year this question comes up of reduction of postal rates. If we decide once and for all that until there is a considerable improvement in the finances of the Department, these reductions are not justified, then, Sir, the Honourable Member in charge will be free to bring about his further improvements that he himself so very much desires.

With these words, Sir, I oppose the amendment and I would ask my Honourable friends opposite not to press it to a division.

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I concede that there are legitimate grievances of the postal employees in the lower grades and they ought to be given higher emoluments. I also concede with my Honourable friend, the Member for Industries and Labour, that there are no surpluses in the Postal Department to reduce postal rates nor can he give any extra allowance to postal employees in the lower grades. But I feel that there can be a large reduction in the superior staff of the Postal and Telegraph Department and the salaries that will be so reduced may go to lighten the burden of the Postal Department in the lower grades. I am more convinced of that view by reading the report of the Postal and Telegraph Committee, which is known as the Ryan Committee. My Honourable friend, Sir Ganen Roy, was also a member of that Committee and as he is going shortly to leave us and leave this House, I will just record here our appreciation of his able Minute of Dissent that is appended to that Committee's Report. Sir, this Committee was appointed to go into the question whether economies in the management of the Post and Telegraph Department could be given effect to. This Committee was appointed on the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee. They observed in their Report of 1922-23 thus:

"Another question that we discussed with the Director General was the possibility of reducing the superior staff in his Department, for some of us feel that retrenchment has left them practically untouched and has spent its force on the rank and file. There is force in what he has said about the impossibility of reduction of officers proportionate to reduction in staff, but we are of opinion, specially in view of the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee, that the matter requires further investigation."

[Mr. B. Das.]

Well, the majority report, which was signed by Mr. Ryan and Mr. Booth, did not advocate a reduction of the staff by giving effect to the combined system of management of the Postal and Telegraph Department. Sir Ganen Roy, in his able Minute of Dissent, laid particular stress that a large amount of expenditure in the Postal and Telegraph Department would be reduced if the combined system of management was advocated. He also gave a quotation from another able Engineer, Mr. Sutherland, who was the Chief Engineer of Telegraphs. He cited him as authority in support of his argument. Somehow it has been the policy of the civilian Postmasters-General and the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs to separate the Telegraph Engineering from the Telegraph Traffic and thereby they have got certain fat jobs in the Postal Department specially reserved for the Civil Service and they have not given effect to the policy of the combined system. Mr. Sutherland in his note observed:

"The disposal of traffic is entirely dependent on close co-operation between Traffic and Engineering, i.e., close co-operation between the outdoor engineer in charge of the lines, the indoor engineer in charge of the plant, the Divisional Engineer who is in charge of both, and the supervising and operating traffic establishments. *None of these have any real connection with the Post Office and have every connection with each other. Postmasters-General of the I. C. S. and Post Office cadres have no knowledge of indoor or outdoor engineering, with which many Traffic troubles are concerned.*"

Well, I am glad that Mr. Sutherland's opinion tallies with mine, and he being an Engineer, he is quite justified in observing that an I. C. S. Postmaster-General has no knowledge of the inner working of the Telegraph Department. Well, my friend Sir Ganen Roy spoke of the *vested interests* and expressed his view that had that Committee gone into the question of vested interests which we all know are specially confined to the Telegraph Department and several branches in the Telegraph Department and also in the allotment of a certain number of posts to the Civil Service in the Postal Department—had they gone into that problem thoroughly, they could have reduced the vested interests and thereby brought about economy in the superior staff of the Postal and Telegraph Departments. I very much appreciate the system of reorganisation and redistribution of circles which my friend Sir Ganen Roy has suggested. He says:

"There are at present thirteen Major Circles and one Minor Circle. Of the thirteen Major Circles, seven are Postal, five Telegraph and one Combined."

He has appended in paragraph 14 of his Minute of Dissent a statement showing that six of these Circles can be made into combined Circles. He goes on to say:

"But from the tabular statement given above, it will be seen that with the proposed redistribution, there will be four Postal, four Telegraph, and three Combined Major Circles, in addition to three Combined Minor Circles which will be placed under Telegraph officers of the executive grade. This arrangement will not only lead to greater efficiency through the unification of control in six circles, but will also effect a saving of two administrative appointments. Further, if this redistribution is adopted, and the re-union of traffic with engineering is sanctioned, there will be no necessity for retaining the appointment of the Traffic Controller."

There are various other recommendations in this able Minute of Dissent which also suggest a reduction in various Divisions in the administration of the Postal and Telegraph lines.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra (Member for Industries and Labour): Will the Honourable Member kindly indicate another single instance?

Mr. B. Das: All right, I will give it to you, Sir.

(The Honourable Member began to search for the quotation.)

Sir Darcy Lindsay: You require notice of the question.

Mr. B. Das: I refer to paragraph 4 of the Minute of Dissent,—Duties of the present Committee—where Sir Ganen says:

“I consider that in addition to the channels recommended by my colleagues, there are several others which they have not touched, but which, in my humble opinion, would not only offer scope for further economy, but also for the improvement of efficiency. The duties of this Committee are very well defined, and as far as I can make out, the Committee is precluded from taking into consideration the vested interests of any branch of the service. It is for Government to consider the recommendations submitted by the Committee, and to see how they affect the vested interests of any particular class of officials of the department.”

I may remind my Honourable friend Sir B. N. Mitra that on various occasions we have asked questions on the floor of the House whether he, as the head of the Postal and Telegraph Department, could not reduce the vested interests so as to bring about economy and efficiency in the management of the Postal and Telegraph Department. I know the Honourable Member has not even any definite reply to give. The usual reply is that the matter is under consideration. The Honourable Member and the Members on the Treasury Benches always take years and years in considering any beneficent proposals that may come before them and they cannot come to any decision in the matter, especially when it affects the vested interests of a certain class, be it Anglo-Indian or European.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Engineering.

Mr. B. Das: I wish it were the Engineering vested interests, but it is not the Engineering vested interests. It is the vested interests of a certain class where the Honourable Member and the Government of India do not like others to come in.

Mr. C. Duraiswamy Aiyangar (Madras ceded districts and Chittoor: Non-Muhammadian Rural): The Honourable Member was engineering vested interests.

Mr. B. Das: If that be so, I am sorry for the Honourable Member. He reflects the sentiments of the Indian side in the Government of India and if he cannot lay stress on this important point and ask the Government to alter their policy so that the Telegraph Department shall be an open general service and Indians are allowed equal opportunities in the Telegraph Department and no extra higher salaries are given to the telegraphists, be they Anglo-Indian or European : . . .

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney (Nominated: Anglo-Indians): There is no difference in salary.

Mr. B. Das: I know there are so many allowances in Calcutta and Bombay. The Anglo-Indian and European telegraphists work a much lesser number of hours while the poor Indian telegraphists sweat like anything and work sometimes 12 to 15 hours a day in some of the smaller Post and Telegraph offices. Who looks after their interests? I know, my Honourable friend Colonel Gidney is a champion of the interests of

[Mr. B. Das.]

his community and pleads the cause of the Anglo-Indian. Nobody here pleads for the sweated labour which is going on in the Post and Telegraph offices, whether it is the postal peons and telegraph peons or whether it is the clerks in charge of post offices. What I want to point out is that my Honourable friend Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra should give effect to the recommendations made by the Member who is sitting on his right (Sir Ganen Roy) and who is his special adviser at present on the administration of the Posts and Telegraphs. I hope economy will be effected and a large amount of money will be saved which will go to lighten the burden of the Indian employees in the lower services.

Mr. Nirmal Chunder Chunder (Calcutta: Non-Muhammadian Urban): On behalf of the postmen and lower grade staff of Calcutta, of whose union I happen to be the President. I beg to thank the Honourable Member for what he has done in increasing their pay and to some extent their prospects but, at the same time, I would draw his attention to certain grievances, which while adjusting their salaries, and improving their prospects, he himself has created. In the first place, Sir, a discrimination has been made between Calcutta and Bombay, possibly on the ground that Bombay is a dearer place than Calcutta, which we who live in Calcutta and have some experience of Bombay dispute. Moreover, this discrimination works very hard on the poor postmen so far as their house allowance is concerned. In Bombay they get Rs. 8-8-0 and I do not think that there is any city in India, not to speak of Presidency towns like Bombay, Madras or Calcutta, where you can get a house or suitable accommodation even for a postman on Rs. 8-8-0 a month. But in Calcutta the house allowance has been kept at Rs. 5 a month and no increase has been made. I know something of Calcutta. I think I am the 7th generation in Calcutta. I have some experience of Calcutta and I can tell you that you cannot get even a room in a hut in any good locality, not to speak of a room in a house, on Rs. 5 a month. This is very petty and I do think that in the near future either some arrangement will be made for the house accommodation of these postal employees or a better and more generous house rent allowance will be given. Then, Sir, a new grade has been created to which I would draw the Honourable Member's attention. It is from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 rising by Rs. 2-8-0 a year for Calcutta, Alipore and Howrah, for the branch postmasters, overseers, overseer-readers sorting and head postmen at those stations. These postmen are afraid that by fixing the pay at Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 rising by Rs. 2-8-0, which it will take them at least 20 years to complete, the Honourable Member wants to exclude the postmen from these appointments in the future. I told him about it and he assured me that that was not his intention. I should like that a public declaration should be made of it. Then there is another point to which I would draw his attention and that is that while he has done something for these postmen he has done nothing for the runners who get Rs. 16 a month, which is even worse than Rs. 9 a month in a mufassil railway station because on Rs. 16 a month you cannot feed a donkey, as my friend Diwan Chaman Lal said. In a city like Calcutta or Bombay, they get no house rent and it is only on this Rs. 16 that these poor fellows have to make both ends meet.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member. Does he mean to say that there are runners in Calcutta?

Mr. Nirmal Chunder Chunder: There are, Sir, I am told. I am also told that so far as the packers are concerned they are to get Rs. 16 and the house rent allowance. In any case Rs. 16 is a pay which is much too small. I hope the Honourable Member will admit that it is too low for anybody living in Calcutta, especially when his duties are such that he has got to live with his family in the city and has got to find his accommodation in the city with the very petty allowance that is given to him for house rent. There is also another thing which I want to bring out. When a postman gets a lift to the grade of Rs. 50 to Rs. 100, that is to say, the higher grade for branch postmasters, overseers, overseer-readers, sorting and head postmen, he has got to pass an examination and one of the subjects for that examination is English correspondence. Except for branch postmasters, I do not think that any knowledge of English more than mere literacy is required for the holders of other posts. Therefore, to impose this examination on them merely for the sake of the branch postmasters' posts being filled from them is very hard. What we ought to do is to make proficiency in correspondence optional so that the man who passes it will be entitled to be a branch postmaster and the man who has not passed that might have to be content with being an overseer or overseer-reader or a sorting or head postman. With these suggestions I leave the matter in the hands of the Honourable Member.

Mr. Abdul Latif Saheb Farookhi (North Madras: Muhammadan): Sir, unto them who have much, more shall be given and from those who have little, even that little shall be taken seems to be the policy pursued by my Honourable friend, Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra. I may quote the rates of salaries given in various places. In Rangoon in the 12 Noon. year 1920, according to the recommendations of the Postal Inquiry Committee, Rs. 50 were given to a clerk, and now there is an increase to Rs. 70. In Burma Rs. 40 were given and now there is an increase of Rs. 10. In Calcutta Rs. 45 were given and now there is an increase of Rs. 5. In various other places similarly there are increases. But Madras seems to have been singularly unfortunate in this respect. Far from there being any increase in Madras there has been a decrease of Rs. 5. Sir, much has been said of the sympathy that my Honourable friend the Member in charge of this Department has been showing to the servants of the lower grades of this Department, but he has yet to give a proof to Madras of his sympathy for these poor people. Sir, the clerks employed in the Postal Department really deserve sympathy and a pay sufficient to keep body and soul together. The Postal Inquiry Committee in the year 1920 made the following remarks:

"Moreover conditions of service of postal clerks differ very much from those of the ordinary clerk in a Government office; their hours of work are longer, and much more irregular, beginning in some cases at 5 A.M. and ending as late as 10 P.M., they get no holidays to speak of, and they have considerable pecuniary responsibilities. In confirmation of this view we quote the following from the minutes of a meeting recently convened at Simla to discuss certain matters connected with the pay of clerical and menial establishments:

'On the other hand in the Post Department the clerical service is unpopular and its duties are harder than those of ordinary clerical establishments.'

Sir, if this statement can be relied upon, then it goes without saying that these people have got more onerous duties to perform than ordinary clerks in other Departments of Government. Such being the case, it is only just that these people should be given at least a salary which will give them the necessities of life and enable them to live in some little comfort.

[Mr. Abdul Latif Saheb Farookhi.]

Sir, in reply to a question by Mr. M. K. Acharya, the Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra gave the following reply :

"The Honourable Member is apparently referring to an account of an interview with me by the General Secretary, All-India Postal and R. M. S. Union, which I have seen published in certain papers without obtaining my acceptance to it and which is full of inaccuracies. At the same time it is a fact that when the revised rates of pay for Madras were before the Standing Finance Committee about this time last year and accepted by that body, it was never suggested by any Member of the Legislative Assembly from Madras either in the House or to me outside it, that the new rates of pay for Madras were inadequate. The only suggestion which I received was to increase the increments in the later years of service to Rs. 5, and this suggestion I found it possible to accept later on. It is obviously not possible for me to mention any names other than those that are available to the public from published debates of the House or published proceedings of the Standing Finance Committee."

Sir, I should like to ask the Honourable Member whether these poor people employed in the Postal Department are responsible for the omission or neglect of Members of this Assembly, and whether, when any stress is laid upon a particular question by Members of the Assembly, it has any weight with the Members of the Government? If it suits their purpose, Sir, they say that the Members of the Assembly have not insisted upon a particular point, and when Members of the Assembly actually come forward and place the grievances before the Government they turn a deaf ear to those grievances and requests. Sir, I should like also to point out in this connection that since the Postal Inquiry Committee of 1920, clearly stated that a sum of Rs. 45 should be given to the clerks working in the City of Madras, no change has taken place from that time to this in the cost of living to justify a backward step in emoluments. The prices of foodstuffs have rather increased than decreased. That being the case, Sir, I do not see any reason why their salaries should be decreased, and if a sum of Rs. 5 a month is taken away from their salaries it can easily be imagined what hardships they will have to undergo. I have got in my hand the family budget of a postal clerk in Madras with a wife and children. I do not want to read all the items. I would only request my Honourable friend to consider how these poor people are to live if this further deduction is made in their family income, for it appears from this budget that these people have already to incur an additional debt every month; and my Honourable friend will agree with me that when poor people are once caught in the clutches of *soucars*, they are compelled to pay a higher interest than they ought and their lives are really made miserable. That being the case, Sir, I would request the Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra to reconsider the case of these poor people in Madras and provide an increment in their salary. Though I do not represent Madras proper, I am a resident of Madras proper and I know that the cost of living there is very high and the salary given to these people is not sufficient to enable them to get the bare necessities of life. That being so, I trust my Honourable friend will give due consideration to their case.

Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda (Ajmer Merwara: General): Sir, I rise just to say a word. I should like to know if it is a fact that last year the Director General of Postal and Telegraph services issued a circular order directing the dismissal of employees in those Departments if they become insolvents. I understand that the Postmaster General of the Punjab, acting on that circular, took severe action against several people and dismissed them. Sir, nobody becomes an insolvent by choice or for

pleasure, and if any particular class of people do largely become insolvent it shows that there is something wrong, particularly so if those insolvents are wage-earners or living on fixed salaries. This fact would show that the people are not able to make both ends meet and that their resources are insufficient for their expenses. The Government Gazette shows that in Bombay too several employees of this Department became insolvent, but no action appears to have been taken against them. Is it because in Bombay you have a humane, sympathetic officer, and the reverse is the case in the Punjab? In the matter of insolvency the action that the Postal Department should take is not to penalize the men but to inquire into causes of insolvency, whether the insolvency in any particular case is due to the fault of the man or because he is unable to live decently on his income. Provincializing the services is one way to remedy the situation. Telegraphists are often transferred from one province to another and such transfers add to their expenses. The matter should be sympathetically considered by the Department.

Mr. H. G. Cocke (Bombay: European): Sir, I do not want to go into the question of the rates of pay of postal clerks to any extent beyond saying that it seems to me a pity that a matter of this sort has to be discussed on the floor of this House so much. I hope the day may come when the matter will be thrashed out more in the Committee Room behind closed doors, and I think it is quite possible that that day may have to come in the future. Sir, bound up with this question are the results of the various departments of the postal service; and I notice from a slip that has been circulated, altering the figures which appear in the buff book, that certain interdepartmental entries have been made for amounts charged to one branch of the service and credited to another from work done, and so on, and as a result of those entries for departmental charges, we get very different results to those we first saw in the buff book. For instance, on the postal side the profit for 1926-27 comes down from Rs. 24,57,000 to Rs. 11,35,000, and in the budget year 1927-28 the profit, Rs. 21 lakhs, is brought down to Rs. 8 lakhs. Those reductions of course are reflected in the other figures. As for the Telegraph Department, in 1926-27 the loss of Rs. 27 lakhs is reduced to Rs. 14 lakhs, and in the budget year a loss of Rs. 18,79,000 is reduced to Rs. 5,97,000. In the Telephone Department the differences are of less consequence. These figures undoubtedly show that there is no money available at present for further increases in wages; I mean, there is no money available, looking at the matter purely from the point of view of commercial results. I know Honourable Members are sometimes inclined to consider that, in spite of the fact that we are endeavouring to run the Postal Department, particularly since the days of the Inchcape Committee, on a business basis, the wages of the postal staff should be increased even though there is no profit available to do it. Well I think in a business department of this sort one has got to have some regard to the law of supply and demand, and although I know it is not popular with this House, if certain post office work commands certain pay and the labour is available to do it for that pay, then, looking at the matter from a business point of view, it is of course desirable that no more than that should be paid. At the same time I do hope that the Honourable Member will gradually, as the postal results improve, be able to do a little more in certain directions for the staff. It is particularly gratifying to notice the improvement anticipated in the figures of the budget year as compared with last year. For instance although the revised postal profits come down from

[Mr. H. G. Cocke.]

11 lakhs last year to 8 lakhs in the budget year, on the other hand, the telegraph loss is reduced from 14 lakhs to 6 lakhs, and the telephone loss is reduced from 4 lakhs to Rs. 2,80,000. Those figures show that some improvement is being effected in post office business, and I hope that that improvement will go on. The annual Report of the Postal Department, which has not yet been issued for 1925-26, contains a number of very interesting charts, but owing to the non-issue of that Report, one is not able to see those charts up to date; but taking the last three years ending 1924-25 it would appear from the annual report that there has been a gradual increase of postal business for the last three years in practically every department; so it should be possible in certain directions gradually to improve the lot of the lower-paid employees of the Post Office.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Sir, I am very grateful to my friend, Mr. Das, for paying a compliment to my community in the course of his speech. I stand here to-day, Sir, to defend the cause of the Indian staff in the Postal Department. (Hear, hear.) I associate myself, Sir, with the remarks passed by my friend, Mr. Nirmal Chunder Chunder. Being from Calcutta, I am closely acquainted with many of the grievances and needs of the Postal and Telegraph Departments in that City. Sir, before I proceed, and even at the expense of being called the Imperial florist, I wish to tender my deep debt of gratitude to the Honourable Member for what he has done for this Department since he took over charge. I notice he is not blushing at this, but he has certainly done wonders for the men. The memorandum which accompanies the Report of the Postal and Telegraph Department and with which I am afraid many Members are not acquainted, is standing evidence of the great sympathy and interest he has displayed in the cause of postal clerks and the menial staff of the Postal and Telegraph Departments. It stands, Sir, as testimony, if any were needed, of the close care and attention he has given to this subject and of the very sympathetic way in which he has attended to the grievances of many of the men of his Department, and I think, Sir, he deserves thanks from this House instead of the many adverse criticisms which have been levelled against him to-day. Sir, this morning when my friend Mr. Chaman Lal called the Department a soulless one and I chipped in and said it was heartless, I did not refer to the Honourable Member. I was referring to my Honourable friend sitting by his side, Sir Ganen Roy, who is going to leave us very soon on retirement. As one looks at him, Sir, as he sits occupying a front bench to-day, he has the appearance of a dove, the wisdom of an owl, and when you ask him for information or any help, he shows he has the guile of a serpent, for with regard to many projects that have been placed before him, he has been as heartless as the Honourable Member has been magnanimous to his menial staff. In this memorandum prepared by the Honourable Member he has made a provision of 12½ lakhs to ameliorate the grievances of the Department, and if you follow up this provision one is pleased to find it progressively increases and that it comes to somewhere between 30 and 50 lakhs within a few years time, when I believe most of the grievances will have been remedied. I do not agree with Mr. Cocke, when he said that these matters—postal grievances—should be discussed behind closed doors. I consider that these matters, being as they are to-day in a transitional stage, should be discussed on the floor of this House, for they represent the grievances of over a lakh of employees. Sir, I would however ask the Honourable Member to give serious attention to the points raised by

Mr. Nirmal Chunder Chunder. I will not follow Mr. Chaman Lall in the details he gave of the expenditure and the pay of certain postal servants. I believe what he has detailed is really correct. Indeed it is not confined to that class of employees only. Debt is a common thing in every branch of the Post and Telegraph Departments. This debt is due in my opinion to one of two causes, (a) extravagant living or (b) insufficient pay. Let us say that it is partly due to both causes. I however know this much, that a good few men in the General Service Telegraph Department are to-day being dismissed for getting into debt. I consider, Sir, the time has come for something to be done to check this condition. I wish to bring to the notice of the Honourable Member certain points which I think he might take further into consideration, and that is owing to the condition of debt that exists in the ranks of branches of this Department, would it not be advisable to start co-operative credit or loans societies? I think this should be introduced, if such societies do not exist at present. The other point I wish again to bring prominently to his notice is this. I believe Government never like to create a precedent. I desire to refer to the treatment the Honourable Member has meted out to those postal and telegraph employees who did such excellent work during the riots in Calcutta. During this period when the prices of food-stuffs and conveyances rose to prohibitive prices those employees risked their lives and cheerfully bore this extra expenditure in their loyalty and devotion to their duty and in return have been denied any compensation. Private firms in Calcutta, seeing the difficulty and the dangers under which their staff worked, gladly provided accommodation and conveyances for them. These postal employees appealed to the Government for a bonus of one month's pay to cover the extra expenses incurred by them. This has been denied to them, although their services were very warmly eulogised by the Postmaster-General of Bengal. I do appeal to the Honourable Member to reconsider this matter which I opine is a reasonable and just request. Sir, I am much struck with the great interest that one sees evinced in this House from various Benches and various parties regarding postal grievances. This shows how splendidly the Postal Unions are organised and operating. Indeed I believe that it is the one department of Government that is so well organized so far as Unions and Associations are concerned. In the Telegraph Department we have two Associations, almost working as rivals. In the Postal Department we have the various Postal Associations and Unions representing the grievances of their men. This to my mind indicates one thing and one thing only, there is certainly a feeling of dissatisfaction in the Department and there must certainly be some truth in the grievances which have been detailed in this House to-day. Sir, the Honourable Member will increase our debt of gratitude if he would expedite his promised enquiry as stated in his memorandum into the grievances of the remaining 40,000 employees of his department. After all, Sir, we must admit that the Honourable Member has certainly effected a large profit in the year's working of the Postal Department. I am sorry I cannot say the same for the Telegraph Department; it seems to be the spendthrift of this twin service. Why should the Postal Department be called upon to pay for the losses of the Telegraph Department? I consider that Mr. Joshi struck a very true note when he suggested that we should follow the Railway Department in inaugurating a reserve fund in which the postal profits may be banked and from which the Honourable Member may from time to time use the surplus to remedy the postal grievances. I certainly agree with Sir Darcy Lindsay and while agreeing

[Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney.]

and sympathising with Mr Chaman Lall's views on these grievances I consider it is impossible to ask for more money from this Department, whilst at the same time you ask it to reduce the revenues by forcing a reduction in the postal charges. Sir, the postal employees cannot have it both ways.

There is one thing, Sir, that I should like to bring to the notice of the House before I conclude my remarks. I was greatly concerned when I was informed this morning that certain alterations are to take place in the General Service of the Telegraph Department. Now, Sir, on this point I am not defending the interest of any particular community because in the Telegraph Department all communities receive the same treatment and the same wages. (*An Honourable Member* "Do they?") They do at least in the General Service. I understand, Sir, that the Army Department intends to recruit into the General Service of the Telegraph Department British soldiers as military telegraphists. I understand that years ago there were about 400 British soldiers employed as telegraphists. To-day there are not even a hundred; they are about 60 strong and it is the desire of the Army Department to bring the number of military telegraphists to about 250 men. Sir, by bringing British soldiers into this Department, what are you doing? You are depriving India and the people of India of a legitimate avenue of employment in one of the utility services in the Government of India. I consider it a wrong policy to enlist British soldiers as military telegraphists in the Telegraph Department. On the floor of this Honourable House I protest in the strongest terms against this deprivation of employment by British soldiers. I represent a community that has played a great part in the Telegraph Department; Indians to-day are also playing a great part and, talking as a son of India, I strongly protest against this intention on the part of the Government and I ask this House to support me in this.

Sir, before I sit down, I once more ask the Honourable Member to use some of the profits he has effected in this Department for amelioration of the rest of the grievances that have been brought to his notice to-day and thereby to add to our debt of gratitude to him for the good he has done for his employees.

Mr. M. K. Acharya (South Arcot *cum* Chingleput: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, I propose just to make a very few observations, so that I may not afterwards come before the House with respect to the particular cut which stands lower down in my name. I have just one or two observations to make, and they will be enough, in my opinion because many of my friends have already spoken about the general subject. I desire to draw the attention of the House to the hardships experienced by the employees in Madras particularly, and when I say this, I do not of course mean to be understood that I deny that there are hardships elsewhere, or that I have no sympathy with the men in other places. But I would particularly appeal through you, Sir, to the Honourable Member in charge of the department to give his most sympathetic consideration to the many statements from Madras that must have reached him also just as they have reached many of us. Madras Province, and Madras city, particularly, have been rather badly handled. Here is a statement which must be before him also how during the latest revision of pay in 1927 as has been pointed out, the initial pay in the city of Madras has been brought down from Rs. 45 to Rs. 40. As my friend Mr. Farookhi just

now said there are statements of family budgets and so on, which I would simply beg of the Honourable Member to scrutinise and to see if after all they are overdrawn. And secondly, Sir, apart from the clerks, I beg of him further to give some sympathetic consideration to the postmen of Madras. There also I find that while postmen in other big cities have been receiving various sums for specific purposes, the postmen of Madras have not yet got that measure at any rate which they would like to have. Then again Sir, there is one class of employees on whose behalf I want to make a very humble appeal; and they are what are called postal recruited telegraphists. I am told that in the old days there were several kinds of telegraphists, station, local, general service and so on; they have been later on reduced to two classes only. But some of them seem to have been postally recruited in the old days and if they had remained in the Postal Department, they would have, when the rates of the postal staff were enhanced, perhaps been receiving some larger salary now. But on account of their transfer—whether they did it voluntarily or otherwise we need not go into that question—but they are at present at a disadvantage. I dare say those cases cannot be very many, and I appeal, not as a matter of right, which is perhaps unnecessary, especially when I am assured that they have a very sympathetic head of the Department; I appeal to him to see if there are any genuine cases of men adversely affected, which cases could receive some kind of consideration. If the total of increments calculated comes to a very large sum I would not claim all that; because, as recently pointed out, it is very difficult to pay large allowances on one hand and try to reduce certain rates on the other hand. Some small consideration, however, might be shown to these few men, as special cases, and they be granted something like 20 per cent. of their salaries in lieu of the increments they would be getting elsewhere. Some such kind of relief I feel sure might be shown by the department. The thing need not be worked on an arithmetical basis such as how many increments exactly they should have got. They would be quite thankful for any relief intended to help them in the distress they are now feeling. I understand of course the view-point taken by Sir Darcy Lindsay and Mr. Cocks. They see things from the capitalist point of view, and the figures talk to them with eloquence as to how much profit results or loss and all that; but these friends seem to ignore the human element which underlies these figures. I would only ask them to consider the human element also. Probably they would realise it if they had happened to be in the ranks. Now, Sir, I repeat whatever may be our difficulties, these men require help. The postmen of Madras City get Rs. 20 to Rs. 30, and those in the mofussil Rs. 16 to 20. I really think these are very low rates to enable them to do efficiently the work they have to do.

Sir Darcy Lindsay: I pointed out to the House that I was in entire sympathy with the increases in the emoluments of the men, but as against that I suggested that there should be no reduction in the postal rates.

Mr. M. K. Acharya: Sir, I thank the Honourable Member on behalf of the men for his sympathy. I make my last appeal to the Honourable Member in charge to see what he can do for the postmen of Madras.

Mr. Siddeshwar Sinha (Gaya cum Monghyr: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I am thankful for the opportunity given to me even at this late hour of Debate, to speak. The condition of postal employees in general and postmen in particular in the province of Bihar and Orissa is worse. In many provinces the scales of pay for the lower grade has been revised.

[Mr. Siddeshwar Sinha.]

and raised since 1920, but the lot of the Bihari clerks in the lower grade has not improved a bit. They still continue to be on the same grade of Rs. 35 to Rs. 120, while in other provinces the scale has risen considerably even from Rs. 70 to Rs. 170. My Honourable friend Kumar Ganganand Sinha very ably presented their case before the House and I will simply draw the attention of the Government to their just and proper grievances and request them to raise the scale of pay of the lower grade clerks at least from Rs. 40 to Rs. 140 as is given to the same class of men in many other provinces.

The condition of postmen in Bihar and Orissa is much worse. They start at Rs. 13. These postmen in point of their duties and responsibilities stand by themselves. They must be literate in more than one language; knowledge of local and provincial dialects are not enough, they are required to read correctly Urdu and English. They are to bear considerable responsibility in pecuniary matters, in fact they are in a small way cashiers and clerks; cashiers, because they are entrusted with money orders and valuable parcels, and have to render accounts and make good losses; and clerks, because they are required to read and write. In short the efficiency of the department depends to a great extent on intelligence and judgment which these postmen are required to use in course of their duties. Besides they are to work for 8 to 12 hours and have to walk for 15 to 20 miles per day not on good pitched roads but through muddy village routes, hot sandy footpaths and have to cross cold water of rivers and nallas. They are to do all these things without shoes and without sufficient clothes but with heavy loads. They enjoy dainty dishes of fish and mutton only in dreams. They are contented with the smell of butter in baniahs' shops where the call of their duty takes them. They do not indulge in the luxurious habits of tea and coffee, their children are contented with their mothers' milk in their infancy. They have not to pay washermen's bills because they have no spare clothes. They do not want anything more than the coarsest rice, the cheapest pulse and a little quantity of salt and fuel in order to keep themselves and their dependants alive. They want the coarsest and cheapest cloth to cover their bodies, but even these bare necessities of life cannot be met out of their scanty pay which they get. Rs. 13 are not enough to maintain even themselves and their wives, not to speak of their children and others dependent on them. In times of illness they are left to the mercy of Providence, as they cannot afford to pay for doctors. They cannot afford to give their children even the most ordinary and elementary education.

Sir, words fail to describe the miseries of these poor men! The higher authorities have not the occasion to know their real conditions, but those who live in the villages know their miseries. I know they cannot afford to buy even a Hindi primer and a slate for their children at a cost of a few annas. I know of a case when a son of a postal peon was compelled to leave his school because the *guru* did not allow him to attend the school without books according to the rules of the education department of the province. I know of a case when a boy aged 10 told an inspecting officer of a primary school that he had not tasted sugar till that age, and he was a son of a postman. Such stories of the miserable lives of postmen are numerous and I am sure many Honourable Members on this side of the House know them. I shall not take the time

of the House any more in narrating these miserable tales but shall only say that these men had great hopes to see at the head of the Department, an Indian. It is a matter of gratification that in some provinces their hopes have been fulfilled to some extent, but in my province their grievances still continue as before. I appeal to the Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra, on behalf of these poor men, to consider their case and do something to relieve them of their miserable life.

Maulvi Sayyid Murtuza Sahib Bahadur (South Madras: Muhammadan): This House may be aware, Sir, that I represent half the province of Madras, including the City of Madras, and as such I feel bound to lay before the Government, through you, the grievances of the postal employees there. Sir, so far as the Madras Province is concerned, the postal employees in the City of Madras have been treated in this way that instead of getting any increase in their salary, their minimum has been reduced from Rs. 45 to Rs. 40 and their maximum is the same, i.e., Rs. 140, though, according to the recommendation of the Postal Inquiry Committee, the City of Madras has been bracketed with Calcutta. The postal employees in Calcutta have been fortunate enough to have their minimum salaries raised from Rs. 45 to Rs. 50 and their maximum has been raised from Rs. 140 to Rs. 160, whereas these unfortunate employees in the City of Madras have to be satisfied with a decrease in their minimum pay and of course their maximum pay is stagnant. Of course I am not at one with my Honourable friend Mr. Duraiswamy Aiyangar who was satisfied with some increment as regards their maximum. I am very particular about their minimum being raised to Rs. 50, just as has been done in the case of Calcutta, and my recommendation is based on the recommendation of the Postal Inquiry Committee, which has recommended that the City of Madras should have the same minimum and maximum as Calcutta.

Sir, there is one point here to which I wish to draw the attention of the House. The City of Madras has been included along with Madura, Dhanushkodi, Bangalore and Hyderabad, which means the Department does not make any difference between these four places and the City of Madras. I am personally acquainted with the cost of living in Madras and Calcutta; I have lived for some time in Calcutta; and I can assure this House that living in Madras is dearer than that in Calcutta . . .

Mr. K. Ahmed (Rajshahi Division: Muhammadan Rural): No, no.

Maulvi Sayyid Murtuza Sahib Bahadur: Mr. Kabeer-ud-Din Ahmed may say "No, no," and of course his "No, no" cannot but be ignored by me and by the whole House. So far as Mr. Kabeer-ud-Din Ahmed is concerned, his knowledge is confined to Calcutta, he had never been to Madras; but I can compare Madras with Calcutta. He cannot go on interrupting anybody and everybody, (Hear, hear.) In this connection, Sir, I have to place the grievances of my own place Trichinopoly, which I come from, before the Government. I do not see any reason or justification for not including Trichinopoly along with Madura, Dhanushkodi, Bangalore, and Hyderabad. Trichinopoly happens to be a centre of education, there are three Colleges there, the S. P. G. College, the National College and the St. Joseph's, and there is a proposal that Trichinopoly should have a university. Moreover, Sir, Trichinopoly happens to be the headquarters of the South Indian Railway. Its workshop is to be removed from Naga-patam to Trichinopoly. So, Trichinopoly is to be ranked second to the

[Maulvi Sayyid Murtuza Sahib Bahadur]

Presidency town and I do not see any justification for not including Trichinopoly along with Madura, etc., and for including Madura, etc., along with the City of Madras. In these circumstances I associate myself with the previous speakers who have successfully made out a strong case as regards the postal employees of the City of Madras.

Again I would draw the attention of the Government to one or two points regarding Sunday and postal holidays. Some two or three years ago, the then Director General of the Post Office called upon the Postmasters to submit proposals as regards the payment of allowances to postal employees, but when my Honourable friend Mr. Joshi asked a question to the Government in the year 1925 as to what became of that proposal, the Government replied that no proposals had been received from the Director General of the Post Offices. I want to know if any proposals have been sent by our Honourable friend the Director General regarding Sunday and postal holiday allowances. If no such proposals have as yet been submitted, I would request the Director General to expedite the proposal.

I have to say a few words about unhealthy localities in the Presidency of Madras. So far as our Presidency is concerned there are some unhealthy localities where post offices are stationed. The Local Government have sanctioned special allowances to their subordinates working in those places with a minimum of Rs. 15 and a maximum of Rs. 60 for the clerical and supervising grade, as special allowances, and other subordinates also get special allowances which range from Rs. 2 to Rs. 5 a month; but the Post Office has a flat rate in almost all cases of clerical staff of Rs. 10 which is paid to healthy localities. I am at a loss to know why this department, which is managed by the Government of India, has not seen its way to give special allowances to those that work in unhealthy localities at the risk of their health. So I would request the Government to consider this matter also and to sanction a special allowance for these people.

(Sir Hari Singh Gour and other Honourable Members moved that the question be put.)

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum (North West Frontier Province: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I do not want to take up much time of the House. I simply wish to make a few observations for the consideration of the House. I have every sympathy with the post and telegraph employees. They deserve, as all other classes of the same status deserve, the consideration of their employers. But there is one thing to be considered in this connection and it is that the pay and salaries of the lower classes, and specially the menials, are not to be compared with the higher classes or based on a more comfortable living wage, but the main thing to be considered and compared is the comfort, the status or the standard of living of the people from whom they are recruited in other walks of life. Unless you raise that general standard of living in the country, Sir, you will be only creating discontent among their fellow countrymen if the pay and position of these lower grade employees in the services are improved. The two should go together hand in hand, Sir. There is already too great a tendency on the part of private labourers in the country to seek employment in Government departments, and if you create a better and a more

comfortable life for them in Government services you will be disturbing the peace and harmony of society and dislocating private services in the country, Sir. A balance should be kept between the two. Unless you improve general conditions in the country and find means for more activity and life in the country in the way of better communications, better trade and so on, which will bring more revenue to Government and specially to this department, you will not be able to satisfy the demands of these people. Larger numbers will be attracted to Government services and there will be a large number of unemployed in the country. Well, Sir, to compare the position of these postal and telegraph employees with that of similar employees in the other departments of Government, I am not at all sure that they are worse off. For instance, if we compare their work and their wages with those of the camp followers in the Army or of the other miscellaneous employees in that department, you will find, Sir, that they are not worse off in respect of wages as compared with those camp followers and others. Similarly, there are other departments where the position of subordinate servants is no better off than the position of the lower services in the Postal Department. A good deal has been done for

1 P.M. them by the department; and, as some previous speakers have already said, the Honourable Member in charge should be given credit for it. I would give him credit at least for one thing, and that is that he has allowed these people to organise themselves into unions and has been able to recognise those unions. If it had not been for their good organisation perhaps we would not have heard so much of their grievances, because there are many other departments which are not so well organised and their affairs never come up before this House, or rather very seldom come up before this House. But one thing which I noticed in this department and which surprised me very much was this: that while the surplus revenue of the Postal Department could be used for the Telegraph Department, as I understood it, the surplus income of a post office could not be utilised for raising a post office to a combined post and telegraph office. I put this question to the Postmaster-General of the Punjab, and asked him whether the surplus income from a post office at a certain place could not justify the opening of a telegraph office at that station, if there were doubts, about the sufficiency of income from the proposed telegraph office, and I was told that no surplus income from the post office could be counted towards the establishment of a telegraph office; and this was naturally surprising to a layman who does not understand these rules.

There is one other little point and I have done. It is this: when sending people for duty to my part of the country, I hope everybody will be given an opportunity to serve there and no discrimination of class or caste or creed will be made. I have noticed occasionally that certain classes are not supposed to be serving on the border. I do not think it is just that there should be any such discrimination, because it was here on the floor of the House yesterday that some Honourable Members—I remember Lala Lajpat Rai among them—protested against the non-recruitment of certain classes of people for service in certain areas or circles; and I hope that every person will be made available for service in every part of the country. With these remarks I resume my seat.

(Some Honourable Members moved that the question be put.)

Mr. President: There are many more speakers: the House now stands adjourned till 25 minutes past Two.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Twenty-Five Minutes Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Twenty-Five Minutes Past Two of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): As President of the All-India Postal and R. M. S. Union, I am in the happy position of rising at this stage of the debate and thanking the various Members who have expressed real sympathy and shown real interest for the welfare of the postal employees. In the case of the Honourable Member who represents the community of "Statutory Indians," I must say that he has placed this House and the postal employees under a deep debt of gratitude. (*An Honourable Member:* "Oh, oh.") I say under a deep debt of gratitude, because there has been an attempt made some time back by some interested people to bring about some kind of difference between the telegraphists and the postal employees. Sir, being a representative of the Anglo-Indian community,—and there are more Anglo-Indians in the Telegraph Department than in the Postal Department,—the words of sympathy, real and genuine, which came from the Honourable Member who represents that community, are very very welcome indeed.

Sir, I expected something more tangible by way of sympathy than a parenthetical assurance when the Honourable Member from Madras, Mr. Acharya, pointed out that Sir Darcy Lindsay showed in his speech a lack of sympathy for the poor postal men when the latter reassured us he was so sympathetic. Since then, I have contemplated over his speech and have also gone through his speech, and I find, Sir, that he has not shown much sympathy in his speech. One only finds that sympathy fenced with unsympathetic arguments. That has been the diplomatic way of the Honourable the Leader of the European Party. He was trying to point to my friend Mr. Chaman Lall how the increase by 75 per cent.—he had so carefully calculated the figures that Diwan Chaman Lall had presented to the House,—was unthinkable, how it was absurd. Sir, I thought when Sir Darcy was making that statement he was talking with his tongue in his cheek. I put it to the Honourable gentleman if he really thinks Diwan Chaman Lall's proposition is either absurd or impossible. Could it be more absurd, I ask, than making, as the Government has made on the strength of the Lee Commission's recommendation, the birth of a child in the house of a European member of the Civil Service in India a national responsibility?

Sir Darcy Lindsay: Sir, I really must protest. I did not even insinuate that Diwan Chaman Lall's figures were absurd. My point was that, if the postman's expenditure was so very much above his income and if the Post Office were to pay him in accordance with his expenditure, it would involve a very large sum of money, and that being the case, I did not see how it was possible to deprive the Post Office of the revenue they are now getting from the scale of postage and therefore it would be impossible for the House to demand a reduction of postal charges. My

sympathies, as I thought I clearly explained, were with the men in their just and legitimate demands.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I am grateful to the Honourable the Leader of the non-official European group for his explanation. But I believe, Sir, the explanation has got to be expounded. The Honourable Member was more anxious to speak from the point of view of the Department: Where is the money to come from? When the Lee Commission's recommendations were before this House, he did not join the Honourable Members on his side of the House in questioning where the money was to come from. Sir, I thought it was the duty of the Honourable Member to suggest ways and means, if he was really so full of sympathy for the members of the postal service. I do hope, Sir, that on the next occasion he rises to speak, next year, he will find some facts and arguments for the increase just as he found justification when the Lee Commission debate was on in this House. As I was saying, Sir, over a crore and a half of rupees were found by the Government but for the poor postmen adequate money is not to be found and the Honourable Member stands up and says: "Where is the money to come from?"—while he did not say, with regard to a domestic proposition when it was transferred to the national shoulders, namely, the birth of a child in the house of an Englishman in India, (Laughter) how the money was to be found! The anxious enquiry, where the money was to come from, was endorsed by my Honourable friend who sat behind him, whom I miss now, the Honourable Mr. Cocke. I ask where did they get over a crore of rupees for the Lee feast? Sir Darcy says, "We know that a large sum of money is provided in next year's Budget for further improvements." A large sum of money indeed! I hope the Honourable Member has gone through the figures that have been provided at page 100 of the detailed statements in support of Demands or Grants. And if he calculates he will find that an average of about Rs 2/8 a month is provided for the postal employees. And does he think that is a large sum? Is this the kind of sympathy that he was trying to explain to this House? It is not a large sum, Sir, it is a very poor sum. If only he will take into consideration the fact that these poor people, like other poor people all the world over, are burdened with large families, he will find that the increase contemplated but not actually given is very poor indeed. I must in this connection say that the Honourable Member in charge of the Department does not go into such extravagant praise of what he is going to do. He thinks that the sum is not too much. He explains:

"Although no definite forecast can be made it is expected that an expenditure of about 10 lakhs will meet the requirements for further revision of pay during 1928 and 1929."

Again he says:

"Though the staff concerned is numerically large it is anticipated that the remedial measures may not be of the same magnitude as that provided for this year."

He does not think that they are going to be of the same magnitude while the Honourable Member who represents the European community in this House is much more concerned with the magnitude of the business.

Sir Darcy Lindsay placed another argument before the House and it was with regard to the postal rates. He said "You want to reduce the postal rates and, therefore, how can you find money to increase the pay of the postal employees?" My answer to it is this. Why do you combine

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the Post and the Telegraph Department? The Postal is a paying proposition, the Telegraph is a losing proposition. The Honourable Mr. Cocke said that the matter has to be taken on "a business basis." He will agree my suggestion is very businesslike. Give the profit, if you are so inclined, of the Postal Department, to the postal employees and find money from elsewhere for the telegraph men. But here is a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Sir, the Honourable Sir Darcy Lindsay used a rather interesting expression. He said that this "sword"—namely, postal rates—"was hanging over the head of the Honourable Member and threatened to lop off his ear any day." He is in the neighbourhood of the Honourable Member and ought to know what a threat it is! The sword has been put over the Honourable Member's head by the Honourable Member himself. Perhaps I am wrong; it is not a serious sword; it is only a toy sword, (Laughter)—a sword which provokes the commiseration of this pitiful House.

Lastly, Sir, the Honourable Mr. Cocke reminded us of the Inchcape Committee. He said, "Since the days of the Inchcape Committee we are endeavouring to run the Postal Department on a business basis." I ask, is the Inchcape axe meant only to cut down the livelihood of the poor or to prevent the lives of the poor being made a little more tolerable? When we remind the Treasury Benches of the Inchcape Committee's recommendations, up rises His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and says, "The recommendations are 'fortuitous'". He repudiates the recommendations. But when real consideration has got to be shown to the poor people of this country, an Honourable Member from the European side of this House—the non-official European side—stands up and reminds us of the Inchcape axe. My own recommendation in this behalf, Sir, is this: The Inchcape axe ought to be used rather freely to make large cuts for the rich and used rather sparingly to make small cuts for the poor.

Now, Sir, there is only one more point, if it is a point. The Honourable Member over there, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, is going to retire after this Session. He will, Sir,—at any rate he hopes to—live in London and have a good time, and he will have a very good pension. Nobody will grudge him that as he has done hard work and lived laborious days. (*Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney*: "Question.") My Honourable friend Colonel Gidney very frivolously questions that proposition. (*An Honourable Member*: "No".) Probably then he very seriously questions it. At any rate there is one serious aspect to it, and it is this: I do not think the Honourable Member has worked so very hard and in such taxing circumstances as the postal peons and the postal runners, and these poor postal runners do not get a pension. Why, I ask, should it be possible under this Government or under this system that poor men who work for long years should not get a pension while men who are getting high pay should also get a fat pension? Not that I grudge the Honourable Member his pension, but I must certainly object to the pension of these highly paid officers when they deny it to the lowest ranks. I must say that the Honourable Member has made no endeavour whatever to provide pension for the poor men in the lowest grades. (*Lieut.-Colonel H.*

A. J. Gidney: "Shame.") Yes, it is a great shame, as the Honourable Member representing the Anglo-Indian Community rightly says.

Nor can I congratulate the Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra for having done so little but I do not blame him. He is an Indian among Europeans. He is a dark man among the white men. Naturally it is very difficult for a dark man to do what he desires to do. He was not responsible for the Lee Commission Report. He was not responsible for giving all those concessions to the Europeans and denying them to the poor people of this country. Therefore I do not blame him. On the other hand I congratulate him on what little he has done and I must feel sorry for what he has failed to do.

I will just dwell on the specific point on which I have given a cut, that is, with regard to the provision of blankets for the poor postal runners in the hill districts. They live in cold all the year round, and amidst the snows in winter. The Honourable the Commerce Member knows how the railway employees living in the heat are provided with warm clothing in winter and light clothing in summer. I think it will be a very good thing if the postal runners in the Himalayan hills and other hills in India are provided with blankets. I have come into contact with them and I know what great difficulties they are put to. I do not want to draw a painful picture or give a pathetic account of them but I do hope the Honourable Member will look into the special difficulties of the postal runners in the hill districts and make provision for their needs.

In conclusion, as the President of the Postal and R. M. S. Union for this year, I thank all those who have expressed their real sympathy and thank also the Honourable Member in charge for what little he has done. I must also thank the retiring Member for trying to listen to the employees' grievances, though he has not been able to do much.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, reference has been made in connection with this debate to the economic law of demand and supply, and I beg to suggest that if some effort is made to open up within the department new avenues of employment for Indians, some of the rigours of that iron law might be softened down. As one of those avenues I beg to draw the attention of the department to the provision of facilities for training Indians in wireless and in marine wireless telegraphy. There are certain difficulties—I do not want to go into details about them as the department knows all about them—and I hope they will do all that is necessary to provide not merely training for what I may call land wireless but also make necessary arrangements for the training of Indians in marine wireless telegraphy. According to section 242 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act of 1923,

"every sea-going British ship registered in British India, being a passenger steamer or a ship of 1,600 tons gross tonnage or upwards has to be provided with a wireless telegraphic installation of prescribed description and shall maintain a wireless service of prescribed nature and shall be provided with such certified operators and watchers as may be prescribed."

Now, Sir, under the conditions that prevail to-day it is not merely not possible for an Indian wanting an appointment as a wireless telegraphist to get the ordinary wireless training, but it is still more difficult for him to get the necessary training and subsequent appointment in marine wireless telegraphy; because under the conditions laid down it is necessary that he should have a sea experience of six months. Now, under the existing conditions upon which I do not wish to dilate, it is impossible for Indians to get the necessary facilities. May I therefore suggest, Sir,

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that the Government should take particular care to see to it that these requirements of sea experience are provided by those steamship companies which receive from the department mail subsidies and other advantages, so that Indians who want certain facilities given to them in this connection may get what has long been due to them. With these words I beg to commend the suggestion to the Department.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Sir, we have now had a full debate on this question of the grievances of the postal subordinates. No less than 21 Members have taken part in the debate, and in the course of the discussion various matters not wholly connected with or bearing upon the question of the grievances of the subordinate staff have been talked about. It would be impossible for me to deal with all these various points in detail, and I propose therefore to confine myself to the more important items.

At the outset, Sir, I should like to express my agreement generally with the view expressed by my Honourable friend Sir Darcy Lindsay, that the floor of this House is not the proper place to discuss in detail these grievances. My Honourable friend Mr. Ranga Iyer may laugh, but when in time to come he displaces us from this side of the House, he will find that the precedent he has created is a most inconvenient one for himself. Nevertheless, I desire to express my obligation to the House for the friendly spirit in which this discussion has generally been conducted. I say "generally", for there are just a few Members who introduced a jarring note into the discussion. I shall deal with those of my Honourable friends first.

The first of these was my Honourable friend Diwan Chaman Lall. Happily his communistic views did not find support from any large body of Members of this House. From the reference in his speech to the Currency Commission's Report and to the Bombay millowner, it is possible that my Honourable friend has taken advantage of this occasion to denounce the vote which he had been persuaded to record in favour of the 16d. rupee the other day, one effect of which would undoubtedly have been to reduce forcibly the standard of living of these subordinate employees of the Post Office, among others, and that my friend was not serious in charging me and the Director General with apathy towards the sufferings of our low-paid staff. In fact, my difficulty with my Honourable friend is that he is seldom serious. On the present occasion also, he omitted to tell the House that in August 1925 I had explained to the Advisory Committee of the Legislature attached to my Department, of which he was then a member, the action which I intended to take in regard to the grievances of the subordinate employees of the Indian Postal and Telegraph Department, and had asked the members to favour me with any specific suggestions they might desire to make; and that no constructive suggestions were ever supplied by him to me. In his usual histrionic style, my friend thought that he would startle the House by figures relating to the family budget of a particular postman at Bombay, which totalled up to Rs. 78½, and by tales of heavy indebtedness of these unfortunate people. But I doubt whether he succeeded in startling anybody, particularly my Honourable friends from Bombay. Now I would suggest to my Honourable friend from North Punjab that he might seriously study the articles of family budgets of low-paid men in Bombay in the local labour Gazette, and pamphlets dealing with the conditions

in Lahore which have been issued by non-official investigators. It might interest this House to learn that the Bombay Postmen's Union had themselves asked for a pay, inclusive of house rent allowance, rising from a minimum of Rs. 40 to a maximum of Rs. 75 after 20 years' service, and that apparently they would be satisfied at present with a pay inclusive of house rent allowance of Rs. 40 rising by an annual increment of one rupee to Rs. 60. In fact that was the suggestion which was also supported by my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated: Labour Interests): May I explain that that will not give them full satisfaction, but they would be content to have that for the present?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: I think, Sir, I mentioned that they would apparently be satisfied for the present with that. So much for my Honourable friend, Mr. Chaman Lall.

I shall next turn to my friend, Mr. B. Das. He apparently belongs to that excellent Trade Union of Engineers; and he apparently holds the opinion that an Engineer alone can hold and fill with credit these higher administrative appointments in the Indian Postal and Telegraph Department. (Mr. B. Das: "What about Sir Clement Hindley on the Railway Board? He is an Engineer.") He drew particular attention to the dissenting minute of my Honourable friend to my right appended to the Ryan Committee's Report, probably because my Honourable friend (Sir Ganen Roy) also belongs to the same Trade Union as my friend, Mr. B. Das. Now, Sir, the effect of the proposals contained in that minute would be a reduction of two or three in the number of administrative appointments. That is all. When I asked my friend, Mr. B. Das, to indicate to me what other economies were indicated in that dissenting minute, my Honourable friend referred me to certain general platitudes. But, Sir, when we look at the table on page 76 of the Ryan Committee's Report, what do we find? According to that table, of the 14 administrative appointments, four only are to be held by officers of the Postal Branch of the Department and ten by officers of the Telegraph Engineering Branch. At the present moment I have got in the Department five officers of the Indian Civil Service four of whom are holding these appointments of Postmasters-General. I have also got a certain number—I think there are about four of them—of Indians and statutory Indians who joined the service in the Postal Branch of the Department and who have by dint of good work and length of service risen to the position of Postmasters-General. Does my friend, Mr. Das, seriously urge that I should get rid of these deserving officers and fill up their places by officers from the Telegraph Engineering Branch? I am sure that no other Member of this House will support him and I for one shall never do it. The essence of the proposal contained in that minute is already being worked as an experimental measure in the Bombay and Central Circles. In these two circles, I have put in the Postmaster-General to take whole charge of the work of the Circle, the Director of Telegraph Engineering where he exists, functioning as his Deputy. That is an arrangement which, I hope, will conduce to a more efficient administration of the work of the whole circle.

Mr. B. Das: Why not have seven Combined Circles?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: I do not want to give way. The Honourable Member will never understand the position

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(Laughter). If that experiment proves successful, it will no doubt be extended to other Circles, but I cannot possibly all at once take the plunge which . . .

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: On a point of order, Sir. Is an Honourable Member entitled to snore in this House?

Mr. President: Order, order.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Now, Sir, that experiment, if it proves successful, will be extended to other Circles, but it is obviously impossible for me, with due regard to the interest of the efficiency of the services rendered by the department, to take a plunge like that which my Honourable friend from Bihar and Orissa in his impetuosity would like me to take. I think, Sir, I have now dealt with him.

Mr. B. Das: What about vested interests?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Vested interests? I do not know what interests he is referring to. I am very sorry that when he made his speech he wholly overlooked the vested interests of the officers who are already in the department who belong to the Indian Civil Service and to the Postal Branch of the Department, the officers of the last named category being almost wholly Indians. I do not know what other vested interests he is referring to; but even if he is referring to the vested interests of the Anglo-Indian, I shall give him a reply. So long as I am in charge of this Department, I shall not agree to listen to any demand for depriving any person now in Government service of his means of livelihood; if in pursuance of a policy of Government a readjustment of the incumbents of appointments has to be made with reference to the claims of various communities, that will be done by the process of gradual recruitment of the various communities and not by removal from service of the people who are already there (Applause).

I next turn to my friend, Mr. Farookhi; and I would not have taken notice of him but for the fact that he talked about a matter regarding which he has apparently very little knowledge. My other friends from Madras know fully well the position in regard to the present rate of pay of postal clerks in Madras city. They have discussed the matter with me and they know the reasons which led me to fix that particular rate of pay. Mr. Farookhi talked of my having reduced the pay of these men. May I ask him: Whose pay did I reduce? The old rate of pay for postal clerks in Madras city was as follows: Rs. 45 in the first year, Rs. 45 in the second year, Rs. 50 in the third year; thereafter by annual increments of Rs. 3 to Rs. 65; thereafter by annual increments of Rs. 4 to Rs. 105; thereafter by annual increments of Rs. 5 to Rs. 140. That maximum of Rs. 140 was reached in the 25th year of service.

The new rate of pay is Rs. 40 with an annual increase of Rs. 5 rising to Rs. 140 in 21 years of service. I submit that this is a distinct gain. Take the earliest years under the old scale. Men used to start on Rs. 45; after two years they rose to Rs. 50; then they proceeded further with annual increments of Rs. 3. What are the new arrangements? A man starts on Rs. 40; in a year's time he gets Rs. 45; the next year Rs 50; and thereafter his rate of pay is better, year after year, than what he used to get under the old arrangements, until the maximum of Rs. 140 is reached. Has anybody been actually hit by that arrangement? The initial pay of Rs. 40 applies to new recruits.

3 P.M.

I shall now quote for the Honourable Member's information certain figures showing the rates of pay given to clerks in "A class" offices of the Madras Government, *e.g.*, the Board of Revenue. In these offices there are two grades of clerks, *viz.*, the lower division and the upper division. The lower division clerk starts at Rs. 40 and stops at Rs. 80. The upper division clerk starts at Rs. 65 and stops at Rs. 125. I may mention that the lower division clerk does not go up to the upper division as a matter of course. His promotion to the upper division is dependent firstly on the occurrence of vacancies in the upper division and secondly on his possessing the necessary qualifications. Now if I give the postal clerk in Madras an initial pay of Rs. 40 and an automatic chance of rising to Rs. 140 after 20 years' efficient service, am I not dealing favourably with him, with due regard to his longer hours of work, and the more responsible nature of his duties? I admit there may be other aspects. I shall come to that later on, and I am at present only dealing with Mr. Farookhi. But for his speech I should have reserved what I have to say on this point later on. Earlier in the debate, Mr. Duraiswamy Aiyangar said that he had discussed the matter with me fully, that he did not want any increase in the minimum, but he wanted the maximum to be increased, which I admit is a much more reasonable proposal. I will deal with the point later on. At present I am dealing only with Mr. Farookhi.

I think at this stage it is necessary for me to make one general observation with reference to certain remarks which have fallen from several of my friends. I think it was Mr. Siddheswar Sinha who wanted the rates of pay of clerks in outstations in Bihar and Orissa to be raised to a higher level. I may tell my Honourable friend quite frankly that it is impossible to go on doing that as a general arrangement, though I am willing to consider the case of particular stations. In this connection a remark which fell from my Honourable friend, Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum, is very apposite. We cannot possibly increase the rates of pay of these employees of the Postal Department to a much higher level above that given to other employees of the Central or Local Government, after due consideration of the different classes of work and hours of work. The same remark applies to special concessions in the direction of exemption from operation of general service rules, etc.

My Honourable friend, Maulvi Muhammad Yakub, seemed to me to have gone slightly off the rails. He talked about the need for equalising the pay of the Railway Mail Service sorters with that of the postal clerks. He overlooked the fact that one of the measures, for which provision has been made in the Budget for 1927-28, is intended to have this effect, and that it is proposed to go further and to give the Railway Mail Service sorter in addition an outstation allowance under certain conditions which are now being worked out. My Honourable friend has my fullest sympathy in his disappointment that it will not be possible to do more for the postman and inferior servants in 1927-28. It is a matter of deep regret to me that the funds at my disposal in the Budget of 1927-28 did not permit of my dealing more fully with men of these classes. Indeed, it was my original intention to give these men preference to the clerks in the proposals to be included in the Budget for 1927-28. Unfortunately, the connected scheme could not be fully worked out by the time when the Budget had to be closed; and I had no option but to put into the Budget the schemes relating to clerks which had been fully worked out. Later on, if funds can be made available by reappropriation, I shall do my best to introduce

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measures for the improvement of the pay and allowances of the postmen and inferior servants at stations which are not included in schemes entered in the Budget. At the same time, I must say that I do not agree with all that my Honourable friend Maulvi Muhammad Yakub has said in regard to the inadequacy of house rent allowances for men of this class at various stations. Mr. Yakub also asked me why the schemes for increasing the house rent allowances of men of these classes were introduced from the 1st October, 1926, though money was available in the Budget of the current year for granting the increased rates from an earlier date. Mr. Yakub has apparently overlooked the financial rule which stands in the way of giving retrospective sanction to schemes, and the desirability of enforcing which has been impressed upon Government by the Standing Finance and the Public Accounts Committees of this House.

On my own behalf, and on that of the Director General and his Department, I desire to express our grateful thanks to my Honourable friends Messrs. Kelkar, Duraiswamy Aiyangar and Joshi and Sir Darcy Lindsay and others for the kind appreciation of our efforts in the direction of ameliorating the conditions of service of these unfortunate subordinate employees of the department. In this connection I desire on the floor of this House to pay a well deserved tribute to Mr. Rogers, the Postmaster-General of Bombay, who has been of the greatest assistance to me in working out the various schemes. (Applause.) I was glad to hear from the Honourable Mr. Kelkar of the good relations existing in the Bombay Circle between the subordinate staff and the higher officers. I have myself been pleased to see other evidences of these good relations, and it gave me considerable pleasure recently to receive from the Secretary of the Postal Clerks and Postmen's Unions in Bombay communications thanking me for all that I have been able to do for the men.

Before dealing further with the subject of grievances, I should like to deal with certain questions of a more general character which have been raised during the debate. My Honourable friend Mr. Joshi said that the postal branch of the Department produces considerable surpluses year after year which are utilised to meet the deficits in the telegraph branches. May I point out to him that that statement is not wholly correct? I must, at the same time, admit that my friend has some justification for it, as the accounts for 1925-26, compiled under the new system, and the figures of the revised estimate for 1926-27 and the Budget for 1927-28, as originally placed before this House, do lend colour to some such impression. As a member of the last Public Accounts Committee, my friend has no doubt seen the Memorandum on the Reconstitution of the Postal and Telegraph accounts which has been printed as Appendix IV to the report of that Committee for 1924-25, and which concludes with the statement that when complete adjustments have been made, "there is reason to believe that the ultimate results arrived at may indicate that neither the Post Office nor the Telegraphs is working at an appreciable profit or loss". From a document which has recently been circulated, it will be seen that these adjustments have been made in the Revised estimate for 1926-27 and in the Budget for 1927-28; and the result is a Postal surplus of Rs. 11.35 lakhs in 1926-27 and of Rs. 8.01 lakhs in 1927-28, with deficits of Rs. 14.18 lakhs and Rs. 5.97 lakhs in the Telegraph Branch and of Rs. 4.34 lakhs and Rs. 2.80 lakhs in the Telephone Branch. It will not be possible to obtain a true picture of the position until accounts in the new

form and with complete adjustments are available. I should like to add that Mr. Joshi was hardly correct in stating that the postal surplus is contributed to wholly by the poor man. As a matter of fact, it comes almost wholly from the businessman who is equally interested in telegraphs and telephones.

My Honourable friend Mr. Kelkar drew attention to the growth of 3 lakhs or 44 per cent. in the non-voted expenditure in 1927-28 over that for 1925-26. Now, Sir, this increase does not mean that we are employing in the Department an increasing number of officers whose pay is non-votable. It is due to a general cause to which reference has been made earlier in the budget debate—I think by my Honourable friend Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar, namely, the transference of certain classes of expenditure from the voted to the non-voted category. As a matter of fact, the number of officers with non-Asiatic domicile whom we employ in the Indian Postal and Telegraph Department is very small compared to the total staff employed. In the Postal Branch, we have got only about a dozen of the former against a total staff in the neighbourhood of a lakh. In the Telegraph Department the number is slightly higher. It is at the present moment about 40, the corresponding figure for 1913-14 being 65. This is due to the fact that in the Telegraph Department we have got to employ a fairly large number of superior engineering officers; but here too with the grant of the Lee Commission's concessions the complementary part of their recommendations has been adopted and recruitment of officers of non-Asiatic domicile has been reduced to 25 per cent. of the vacancies.

Mr. Kelkar also drew attention to the fact that between 1924-25 and 1925-26 the voted postal expenses have risen from Rs. 557 lakhs to Rs. 600 lakhs, while the voted telegraph traffic expenses have risen from Rs. 122 lakhs to Rs. 148 lakhs. Now, Sir, almost the whole of the latter increase is accounted for by the fact that since 1925-26 we have been debitting to telegraph traffic a sum of over Rs. 25 lakhs on account of the share of cost of combined offices. If this adjustment had been made in 1924-25, the postal expenses in that year would have amounted to 532 lakhs and the telegraph traffic expenses to 147 lakhs against 600 lakhs and 148 lakhs respectively in 1927-28. There has been a large increase of 68 lakhs in the postal expenses due to the growth in traffic and to the measures taken for the improvement of conditions of service of the subordinate staff; while the increase in the telegraph traffic expenses during the period has amounted to only about 1 lakh. The result in the latter case is partly due to the fact that during this period we have been consuming our surplus telegraphists.

Mr. Kelkar also wanted to compare the pay and allowances of postal clerks in Administrative offices with those of clerks in Secretariat offices and perhaps also in Account offices. Sir, I have personal experience and knowledge of work in all three classes of offices, having actually worked as a clerk in an account office and in a Secretariat office; and I can assure the House that no comparison is possible. The work done by the majority of clerks in the postal administrative offices does not materially differ from that done by an ordinary clerk in a post office, while the hours of work of the former are less than those of the latter. There is, however, a certain number of clerks in the postal administrative offices employed on really important work, and their case will receive due consideration. I can also assure my Honourable friend that the duties of a departmental signaller, and the technical skill required from him, do not wholly bear comparison

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with those of an ordinary postal clerk or signaller. Even so the departmental telegraphist gets a higher remuneration as compensation for liability to general service all over India 80—5—170 as against Rs. 60—5—160 given to the postal clerk, and a graduate entering the latter service, *i.e.*, of a postal clerk, as a matter of fact also starts on Rs. 80

The departmental telegraphist in the general service gets a higher remuneration as compensation for liability to general service all over India and Burma. The postal clerk's transfers are ordinarily limited to the postal division, consisting of about a couple of districts, for which he is recruited. My Honourable friend will no doubt recognise that an employee of the former class should, in harness to him, receive a higher scale of remuneration than the latter; and it has indeed been urged by some Members that the remuneration which a departmental telegraphist of the general service now receives is not adequate to keep him out of debt after meeting expenses consequent on transfer, including in some cases the maintenance of double establishments. I am not however prepared to accept the validity of this contention. It is true at the same time that in present conditions the liability of the general service telegraphist to transfer all over India and Burma is more on paper than a real one. To make the liability more effective it is our intention to reduce the number of general service departmental telegraphists by an increase in the station service.

In regard to the recruitment for the services of departmental telegraphists owing to a surplusage in the staff, recruitment has practically been stopped in recent years except to the extent required to meet our commitments to certain Anglo-Indian and Indian schools. We hope that this surplusage will be wiped out in 1927-28 and I am now engaged in working out a scheme of recruitment for the future which will do away with the preferential treatment now enjoyed by certain schools, though it may be necessary to continue the arrangement for another year, and which will be framed with due regard to the claims of the various communities and of the men already employed in the department on signaller's duties.

My friend Mr. Joshi also asked a question in regard to the proportion of Indians in the Wireless Branch of the Department, and my friend Mr. Haji wanted to know what facilities there were for the training of Indians in wireless including marine wireless. Now, Sir, in the Superior Service of the Wireless Branch, out of 7 appointments, 2 are filled by Indians—I think my friend Mr. Joshi will admit that that is a fairly good proportion to start with. In regard to the subordinate gazetted service and wireless operators, there are 78 Europeans and 54 Indians, including in that term statutory Indians. Well, Mr. Joshi may laugh, but I am afraid I cannot help the position.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I do not want that the statutory Indians should be treated as non-Indians, but I want the two classes to be separate. That is all.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Why?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I should like to have the figures of Anglo-Indians and other Indians.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: If that is all that my friend wants, I shall tell him. At the present moment, one Indian of unmixed descent is employed in the Wireless Branch, but the other day I gave

him the reason as to why there is so far only one such Indian. We are trying to get rid of the surplusage of departmental telegraphists in the Telegraph Branch of the Department, and we have drafted several of these men into the Wireless Branch. At the same time, I think, I also informed my friend that steps are being taken to introduce a scheme of recruitment which will give proper facilities for the employment of Indians. There is a departmental wireless training class in Calcutta which, in addition to training subordinates of the department, offers special facilities for instruction of private students in wireless. I have been given to understand that facilities exist there also for training in marine wireless, though we have received no applications from any private students for instruction in this particular branch of the subject. The explanation probably is that some preliminary experience on ships is required, as was mentioned by my friend Mr. Haji. If that is so, I shall have the matter further looked into.

Then, Sir, it was hardly fair for my friend Lala Lajpat Rai to have asked me to confirm a statement made in another place by the Secretary in my Department. All the same, I can state for the information of my Honourable friend, who at the present moment is not here, that a general scheme for the future recruitment of postal clerks is now being worked out, and that will provide for due representation of various communities in accordance with the general principles laid down by the Government of India. That will remove any abuse, if such abuse does exist, in particular circles in the matter of recruitment.

I shall next turn to the question of grievances. I can assure the House that ever since February 1925 when on a request from my friend Mr. Jinnah I gave a pledge to the House that I shall examine these grievances, I have personally spared no pains in discharging to the best of my ability the commitment which I then entered into. (Applause). The House will readily recognise that the question is a large one, including as it does, hours of work, paid holidays, rates of pay and allowances, housing, uniforms, etc. No aspect of the question has escaped my attention. At the outset, however, I had to recognise that I was bound by financial limitations. I was, however, glad to find that my Honourable colleague Sir Basil Blackett had stated on the floor of this House that he did not desire to treat the Indian Postal and Telegraph Department as a profit-earning institution and he has repeated that statement again in his budget speech on the 28th of February last. I took advantage of this declaration and entered into an arrangement with him by which any small surplus earned by the Department as a whole, which would be of no use for the purpose of reduction of rates, would be available for developing the service on efficient lines, due regard being paid to economy. One of the items of such development is the expansion of postal facilities in rural areas, which to my mind is the best means of helping the poor man. The other item is the amelioration of the conditions of service of the low-paid staff, for, unless we get the staff into reasonable state of contentment, it would be impossible to secure the proper efficiency of the service. I was able to persuade my Honourable colleague to accept this arrangement, and it is this arrangement which has helped me not only to take certain action in the direction of ameliorating the conditions of service of the subordinate staff but also of largely extending postal facilities in rural areas. What I have been able to do in the former connection will be found in the Memorandum appended to the detailed statement in support of Demands for Grants for the Indian Postal and Telegraph Department for the year 1927-28, and the published

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reports of the proceedings of the Standing Finance Committee. In regard to the development of postal facilities in the rural areas, I have already informed this House that whereas in the 9 years ending 1924-25 only 780 additional offices,—permanent and experimental,—were opened, in the two years 1925-26 and 1926-27 we shall be able to open 1,400 new post offices. I consider the financial arrangement to which I have referred to be in the best interests of the Indian Postal and Telegraph Department. If the House itself is really sincere in its desire for the development of postal facilities in rural areas, and for the further amelioration of the conditions of service of subordinate employees, I would beseech it not to take any action to disturb this arrangement. For, once that arrangement is disturbed and the Indian Postal and Telegraph Department has to depend on a subsidy from the general tax-payer, my position will simply be that of one of the numerous beggars who knock at the door of my Honourable colleague at budget time for a share of any surplus that is available for distribution. The demands on him are numerous, and I know in that event what will be my fate. Not only will any rapid development of postal facilities in rural areas be impossible, but any further progress towards amelioration of the conditions of service of the subordinate staff will be largely retarded. Indeed, the position may become much worse. It will be difficult for me to get adequate staff required for the performance of the services of the Department on efficient lines and there will be an inevitable sweating of the existing staff. I am much obliged to the Honourable Sir Darcy Lindsay for having already drawn attention to the financial aspect of the subject. I do not propose to deal in detail with the various suggestions which have been placed before me, for further improvements of pay, etc., of the subordinate staff, for I understand that they are in the nature of suggestions for my consideration, and I am not required at this stage to commit myself in regard to them one way or the other. Subject, however, to what I have said in regard to the financial arrangement and on the general subject of pay and allowances of the subordinate employees in the Postal and Telegraph Department, I can assure the House that all these suggestions will receive my most careful and sympathetic consideration, particularly that in regard to the further improvement in the pay of the postal clerks in Madras City. I have already justified the action which I have taken in that connection; but in view of the considerable feeling expressed in this House, not only by many reasonably-minded Members from Madras but also from other provinces, it is possible that there is some aspect of the question which has been overlooked by me, particularly as I never had the good fortune to visit Madras. (Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty: "Come there.") If, however, it is the desire of the House to disturb the financial arrangement to which I have referred, I shall have to conclude with deep regret that it is not their desire to help me in the rapid achievement of the goals at which, as already indicated, I have set my heart.

Mr. President: Does the Honourable Member (Mr. Prakasam) ask for leave to withdraw?

Mr. T. Prakasam: No, Sir.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Indian Postal and Telegraph Department (including Working Expenses)' be reduced by Rs. 1,500."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: As a result of the debate we just had items Nos. 47 to 57 are disposed of. I do not know if any Honourable Member maintains that any of these items is not disposed of. (No Honourable Member raised any objection.) I therefore call upon Mr. Neogy to move No. 58.

Division of Portfolios and non-appointment of a Member for Communication.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I beg to move that the Demand under the head "Indian Postal and Telegraph Department (including Working Expenses)" be reduced by Rs. 100.

The point that I want to raise in this debate has been indicated by me on the agenda paper. My complaint is that there is no Minister for Communications in this Government as recommended by no less than three expert committees. I raised this point on two previous occasions, but unfortunately for me, I did not succeed in getting a reply from Government. That is the reason why I desire to raise this point specifically with a view to get a reply from Government. Sir, in the first Legislative Assembly an Honourable Member contended that in the interests of the physical well-being of the Honourable Members of the Executive Council a little more work ought to be entrusted to the Indian Members so as to relieve the European Members of the Executive Council of the very heavy burden that falls on their shoulders. It is not my intention on the present occasion to reflect on the growing rotundity of some Honourable Members of the Executive Council and the deepening furrows on the faces of others. (Laughter.) I maintain that it is a very serious question, and that the present is an opportune moment for revising the portfolios as they are at present constituted in the Government of India. Sir, first of all this question came up before the Llewellyn Smith Committee. The Committee was presided over by Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith, a civilian of great repute who was brought out from England with a view to advising the Government of India on the re-arrangement of their administrative machinery at the headquarters of the Government. Unfortunately for us non-official Members, the full report of this Committee is not available to us. Only certain extracts have been placed in the Library, but I find from the Acworth Committee Report that the Llewellyn Smith Committee had made a recommendation for the establishment of a portfolio of Communications in the Government of India. The second committee that made almost the same recommendation was the Acworth Committee. The Acworth Committee contemplated the constitution of a portfolio of Communications including the Railways and Posts and Telegraphs and Transport. Perhaps they would have included Aviation too if that subject had engaged their attention at that time.

Mr. K. Ahmed: How does this come under the Postal and Telegraph Department?

Mr. B. Das: You will not understand it.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: My Honourable friend raises a very pertinent question. My desire is that the Postal and Telegraph Department should be represented in this House by a Member who should call himself the Member for Communications, and not the Member for Industries and Labour. That is my point. Then, Sir, the third committee that made a very similar recommendation was the Inchcape Committee who found

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that the work of the Government of India was entrusted to too many departments and too many portfolios, and they suggested that the civil administrative departments should be divided into three portfolios one of them being the membership of Communications comprising Railways and Posts and Telegraphs. We find from the Retrenchment Committee's Report that at the time when the Committee were considering this point the Government of India had taken up the position that this particular matter was engaging their attention. I do not know whether the Government of India have come to a decision since then. As I said, the present is an opportune moment for this House to raise this question, because Sir Charles Innes is about to retire and his portfolio might very conveniently be redistributed so that we might have a Member for Communications who would be responsible for the administration of the Railways, Posts, Telegraphs, Civil Aviation and other cognate subjects leaving Commerce and other cognate subjects to be administered by Sir Charles Innes' successor. Sir, I cannot help raising one more point that I raised on the two previous occasions. I am very sorry to have to say this, but I cannot keep from this House my suspicion that the reason why the Government are not giving effect to this recommendation is that if this re-arrangement were to be brought about, either the Commerce portfolio or the Communications portfolio would have to be entrusted to the hands of an Indian Member of the Executive Council. Sir, it is no pleasure to me to give expression to this suspicion that is in my mind. But, Sir, it depends on the Government by their action to dispel such suspicions that may be very reasonably lurking in the minds of non-official Members. Sir, with these words, I move my motion.

Mr. K. C. Roy (Bengal: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I desire to support the motion of my friend Mr. Neogy. From my experience of the Government of India I know that the Member in charge of the Commerce and Railway Departments is extremely overworked. Of late he has taken upon himself the charge of the Ecclesiastical Department. The Ecclesiastical Department was formerly run by the Department of Education, Health and Lands, but as that Department was Indianized, the charge had to go to Sir Charles Innes. The impending retirement of the Honourable the Commerce Member provides an excellent opportunity for the Governor General to redistribute the portfolios, and also the impending retirement of Sir Clement Hindley gives an opportunity to reconsider the composition of the Railway Board. This Railway Board was constituted at the instance of Mr. Thomas Robertson, who came from Ireland many years ago and made certain definite recommendations. But the Board of to-day is not the same Board which Mr. Thomas Robertson had in view. The impending retirement of these two Honourable gentlemen from the Government of India provides an excellent opportunity and the Governor General in Council will do well to seize it.

As regards the distribution of portfolios between the European and Indian Members, I know, Sir, that the Indian Members are equally hard worked. I think my Honourable friend Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra has innumerable subjects to deal with, almost numberless, and I should not like to overburden him with the charge of Railways. (Humanly speaking, Sir, he cannot discharge that obligation in addition to his present duties.

As regards my friend the Honourable Sir Muhammad Habibullah, the growth of overseas questions and of Indian interests abroad has placed upon him such a stupendous and delicate task that I should not also like to overburden him with Railways or the Post Office. But what I feel is that the Railways should be entirely separated and attached to the Post Office and the Department of Communications, and if you like, under an Indian Member to be attached to the Government of India.

Mr. B. Das: Sir, I feel highly gratified and feel very happy that I am taking part in this debate. During the last two years I and some other friends have given seven or eight cuts in order to bring this subject up for discussion before the House. Unfortunately, owing to the idiosyncracies of this House we have never been able to reach it. (Laughter.) Well, as my friend Mr. Neogy told the House just now, this is the most opportune time to discuss the subject. We have a new Governor General. Lord Irwin is new to India and new to the Civil Service here. He does not know the policy of the Civil Service, and if he knows the mind of this House and knows the mind of Indian India, it may be that he will split up the portfolios, which he alone can split up and not the Honourable Sir Charles Innes. The other day—I may have been wrong—I questioned him about his successor, and he said it is the King-Emperor who appoints his successor. I know, Sir, that the King-Emperor appoints successors to any Honourable Members on the other side, but it is on the recommendation of the Governor General in Council, and when the Governor General becomes bureaucratic and seasoned in India he follows the dictates of the Executive Bench on that side. So that it is best, while Lord Irwin is new to India, that he should know the mind of Indian India. Sir, a Member for Communications, who will be in charge of the different modes of communication, be it Railways, be it Ports and Harbours, be it Posts and Telegraphs, or that newly born child—Civil Aviation—will see that there is no clash of interests between the different sections. We know how the railways are fighting against the development of small ports, minor and major ports, because it is against the interests of the railways that coastal traffic should be developed, and they do not allow the development of minor ports whether it is in my own province, Orissa, or on the Bombay side. If the Member for Communications is one who is above all this, and who looks into the interest of the people apart from the interest of railway administration, apart from the interest of Port Trusts or combined Port Trust and British shipping interests, then in time coastal traffic will be reserved to Indian owned shipping companies and Indian steam-ship companies initiated by Indians will develop, and whether our internal trade is borne by the railways or by steamers, they will all be borne to help the people and not for the interest of one system of communications or another system of communications. But I need not go into that in detail. (Hear, hear.) I do not know the mind of my European friends there, and even if they do not agree with us, I do not care (Laughter); nor does India care; if you are our friends, try to be just; if you are not just, we will try to ignore you. (Laughter.) But it is time that the portfolios under His Excellency the Governor General were reshuffled, and a Member for Communications appointed; and let him be an Indian Member who will be in charge of all these subjects that deal with communications.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: Sir, I rise to support this demand for the amalgamation of all the activities of the Government of India which are concerned with our communications. The Honourable Mr. Neogy has already told us that this question has been one which has been before the Government for a very long time. Three Committees have discussed it and recommended some sort of amalgamation. So far as the Indian point of view is concerned, my feeling is that the great reason, the predominant reason why we are in favour of an amalgamation of communications and the placing of that Department under an Indian (*Mr. K. Ahmed*: "No, no.") is that under an Indian the railways and the waterways will develop along lines which are economically beneficial to our country. One of the reasons, Sir, why this post should be created—and I do not want to deal here with the question whether an additional Member of the Executive Council should be appointed, or whether there should be such a reshuffling of the portfolios that all the communications are brought under one head—is that if they had been brought under one head, and if an Indian had been placed in charge of that Department, last year this House or rather its predecessor and the country would not have heard from the Government Benches a speech which, as I shall presently point out, is remarkable in so far as it ignores the long-expressed desire of the people of India in the matter of the mercantile marine.

Sir, this question of the mercantile marine is one which

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes (Member for Commerce and Railways): I rise to a point of order, Sir. The question we are discussing is whether there should be a Department of Communications, not the question whether there should be an Indian Member for it.

Mr. President: I understand the Honourable Member gives his reasons why all communications should be in the hands of one Member.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: I beg to submit that ocean roads are as much our lines of communication as the land roads and the rail roads and others that will be brought under this one Department of Communications. I quite realise the anxiety of Sir Charles Innes that I should not at this stage go into a detailed criticism of his speech in the last Assembly in treating the Report of the Mercantile Marine Committee; but if I do so, it is merely to point out that by having one head for all these Communications, we would have got from the Indian Member, that I pre-suppose, much more sympathetic consideration of a demand which has not merely been urged from different corners of India, but consistently put before the Government.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Since when?

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: For years together, Sir. I will presently come to the details if you will allow me. All the feeling on this subject was concentrated, as I was going to say, before the Indian Mercantile Marine Committee which, at the instance of Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar, was appointed in 1923. Now, Sir, I will just point out to you what difference it makes in the treatment of these subjects of Communications when there is one Member who is in charge of all our Communications and particularly when the Member happens to be an Indian. Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer introduced his Resolution in January 1902 recommending that a Committee be

appointed to consider the question of nautical training and the development of an Indian Mercantile Marine and I am sure that from the facts that I will give it will be clear that if there was one Member and if . . .

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: May I again rise to a point of order? I entirely fail to see how this is relevant. May I point out what the Honourable Member calls ocean communications and land communications are already under one Member of Council, namely, myself.

Mr. President: Does the Honourable Member agree to the premises that both these communications are already under one Member?

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: I beg to point out, Sir, that the ports . . .

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: They are under me.

Mr. President: I quite appreciate the anxiety of the Honourable Member to discuss the question of the mercantile marine; but I am afraid I cannot allow this debate to be turned into a debate on the policy of Government regarding the mercantile marine.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: There is a motion on the paper later.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: I beg to state, Sir, that I do not here want to discuss at length the question of an Indian mercantile marine. All that I am concerned with is to point out that if this amalgamated Department was under an Indian Member of the Executive Council . . .

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: On a point of order, Sir, we are not discussing whether there should be an Indian Member, but we are discussing whether there should be one Department of Communications.

Mr. President: Is it or is it not a fact that Ocean Ways and Railways are under one head?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Railways, Ports, Shipping, Navigation, are all under one head already, Sir.

Mr. President: This is a sufficient answer to the Honourable Member.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: I beg to point out that the question of the licensing authority, whose creation is recommended by the Mercantile Marine Committee (Laughter) in order to develop the Indian mercantile marine, is one of the matters that will come under this Member for Communications. That being so, Sir . . .

An Honourable Member: Go on.

Mr. President: Go on as far as you can.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: That being so, Sir, I will revert to the point that I was making, namely, the long delay in putting up measures . . .

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. President: I cannot allow the Honourable Member to proceed any further.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: I hope you will allow me to discuss this licensing authority, because, Sir, this

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: May I ask how licensing authorities affect the Department of Communications?

Mr. President: Mr. Ruthnaswamy.

Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy (Nominated: Indian Christians): Sir, my reason for supporting this amendment is that I believe it is one of the ways in which development of the facilities for communication in this country can be ensured. If there is to be a development in road building . . .

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: I rise to a point of order. Road building is a provincial subject.

Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy: But there are some roads under the Honourable Member's jurisdiction?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Only in those areas under the Central Government, or strategic roads.

Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy: If roads are not under the Honourable Member's jurisdiction, I wonder why he took part in the discussion that took place the other day in another place in regard to the further development of road building.

As I was saying, Sir, when I was interrupted, if there is to be that progress in the building of communications which is necessary for the development of the resources of this country, it is necessary that all communications should be under one department under one Minister. The utter inadequacy of the roads in India is almost a by-word and reproach. By the most generous calculation there are only 200,000 miles of road, and this added to the 30,000 miles of road gives us a total land communication of only 230,000 miles. Everybody who knows the extent of communications that exist in the most advanced countries, or of even the least advanced, of Europe, will know that it is utterly inadequate for the resources of this country. With the coming of the motor car as a means of transport, every country has felt that the road is once more coming into its own. (*An Honourable Member:* "What about the Air Force?") So much so is this felt that immediately before and during the War in Europe in almost every country in Europe a special Ministry of Transportation was established. England which is so afraid of bureaucratic development was not afraid of establishing a Ministry of Transport during the War, which has survived the War.

There are many practical reasons, Sir, why all communications should be brought under the jurisdiction of one department. Everyone has noticed the utter insufficiency of bridges over most of our rivers in this country. (*An Honourable Member:* "Breaches?") No, bridges. I know that there are breaches, but I was talking of bridges. Now if railways and roads had been under one department, the building of a railway bridge would at the same time have helped the building of a roadway under the railway bridge, so that, not only could railways cross the river but foot passengers could walk across the river on the road-bridge.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Who would pay?

Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy: Who pays now?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: The Local Governments.

Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy: In this connection I should like to refer to the sympathetic attitude taken by the Member for Commerce in the other place when a discussion took place on the establishment of a Road Board and the development of road communications in India. He undertook to accept the Resolution moved by, I think, the Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy in the other place and gave an undertaking that he would consider sympathetically the question of appointing a committee which would examine the whole question of the development of communications. In the course of the numerous interruptions for which the Honourable Sir Charles Innes was responsible during the speech delivered by my friend Mr. Haji, he made a point by saying that, even now railways and ports and other things were under the same Member. But Mr. Neogy's grievance was that Sir Charles Innes was at the same time in charge of Commerce, and although we know the efficiency of Sir Charles Innes and his infinite capacity for taking pains, I do not think that the marriage of Commerce to Railways is favourable to that development of communications which we are all looking forward to. I am not dealing at all with the question whether an Indian should be appointed in charge of either of these departments because I think that issue is an utterly irrelevant issue; what Mr. Neogy's amendment is asking is that the whole business of developing the communications of this country should be placed under one department, so that those communications may have a decent chance of development in the near future.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Sir, had I been present when Mr. Neogy moved this motion, unfortunately I was detained outside the House, I would have appealed to you on a point of order, because the effect of Mr. Neogy's motion, if it is carried, is that the Governor General in Council will be censured for a matter which is entirely outside the purview of the Governor General in Council. Under section 40 (2) of the Government of India Act it is the Governor General who makes rules and orders for the more convenient transaction of business, not his Executive Council.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will you please read out that section?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: I am always ready to oblige Mr. Neogy:

"The Governor General may make rules and orders for the more convenient transaction of business in his executive council, and every order made, or act done, in accordance with such rules and orders, shall be treated as being the order or the act of the Governor General in Council."

Mr. K. C. Neogy: "In Council."

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: At any rate it is entirely a matter for the Governor General to decide how the portfolios of his Executive Council shall be distributed; it is not a matter which directly concerns the Governor General in Council. Nevertheless this question has come up on more than one occasion during my term of office. Indeed I do not think there has been a budget debate in which my friend Mr. Neogy has not raised it, or at any rate has not attempted to raise it. Indeed it is a fascinating occupation to indulge in projects for the redistribution of work among the different Members of the Executive Council. The

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Llewellyn Smith Committee tried their hand at it; the Acworth Committee tried their hand at it and the Inchcape Committee again tried their hand at it. (*An Honourable Member*: "But without success.") But these Committees, distinguished though they were, possibly had not, all of them, the necessary experience of work inside the Government of India to enable their recommendations in this particular matter to carry that authority which their other recommendations did.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: May I remind my Honourable friend that Sir Malcolm Hailey was a member of the Llewellyn Smith Committee?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Sometimes Homer nods! I myself have never been able to see exactly what force there is in this demand for a Ministry of Communications in the form in which it was put to the Government of India in the Acworth Committee's Report. What the Committee suggested was that Railways, Ports and Inland Navigation, so far as Inland Navigation concerns the Central Government, Road Transport so far as it is under the control of the Government of India, and Posts and Telegraphs—should all be comprised under a single Member.

Now the first point I have to make in regard to this is that to all intents and purposes that recommendation has been carried out. The Railways, Ports and Inland Navigation, in so far as Inland Navigation concerns the Central Government, are all under one Member of Council, namely, myself. The only point which we have not carried out in the Acworth Committee's Report is in respect of Posts and Telegraphs; and the Committee themselves say there is no very immediate connection between other communications and Posts and Telegraphs; they merely included Posts and Telegraphs in order to give that Member of Council what they thought a proper day's work. Now, why did the Acworth Committee make this recommendation? Their primary intention was to secure that the Member of Council in charge of Railways should have enough time to do his work properly. Let me read what they say. They were criticising the former system and they say:

"The natural effect of the interposition of this semi-independent Board is that the Member responsible for it is not in constant touch with its work. When questions which have to be submitted to the Council are brought to him, it is necessary for the Board to coach him. He may not agree with them and yet may hesitate to override those much more conversant with the matter than he can possibly be."

They went on to say:

"The Railway Board is in effect in the position of a step-child and like most step-children tends to be less well-treated than other members of the family. We are convinced the Indian Railway Administration will never be able to give a satisfactory account of themselves, to earn the revenue which they should earn and to render the public the service which they ought to render until they are represented on the Viceroy's Council by a Member who is fully in touch with their daily work."

I am not going to express an opinion whether or not I am fully in touch with the work of the Railway Board, but at any rate since that passage was written I can claim that the Indian Railways have in many respects given a satisfactory account of themselves. I can claim that they have earned the revenue which they should earn, or at any rate 31 crores during the last 3 years; and I can claim that they are rendering the public much better service at any rate than they used to render. As I think

I have shown, the main object of the Acworth Committee was not to set up a Department of Communications but really to get a Member of Council who would be able to devote the greater part of his time to the affairs of the Railway Administration; and what they had in mind was the improvement of the Railway Administration and the service rendered by the Railway Administration to the public. That was the very reason why, when the portfolios were redistributed by His Excellency Lord Reading, I was relieved of what at one time I had when I was a Member for Commerce and Industry and Railways; I was relieved of work connected with the Posts and Telegraphs, or rather Sir Thomas Holland was relieved of work connected with Posts and Telegraphs, of Overseas emigration, and work connected with Industries and Labour; and the Railway Member has now got merely the Commerce Department and the Railway Department. It is a very much lighter job than it used to be, and speaking from an experience of several years now I say that the amount of work which he is called upon to do as Railway and Commerce Member of the Government of India is by no means too heavy a burden for one man to carry. I think Mr. Neogy will agree with me there is no particular reason beyond the name why Posts and Telegraphs should be associated with Railways. In fact, I myself hold very strongly that it is better they should not be associated together. After all, Posts and Telegraphs are one of our most valued customers, and naturally we treat them as well as we can, but for that very reason I think they and the Railways should be under separate Members of Council. Also I say, Sir—and I do not think anybody in this House will disagree with me, that at budget time it will be quite impossible for one Member of Council, first to defend the Railway Budget and then to take on the Posts and Telegraphs Budget. The House must realise that under the present dispensation if the same Member of Council has to defend in detail a Budget of the size first of the Railway Budget and then of the Posts and Telegraphs Budget, it will be a very great strain upon him. And I say that no one Member of Council could in budget time take up first the Railway Department and then the Posts and Telegraph Department Budget.

Then again, Sir, I think there is a great deal of misapprehension as to what a Minister of Communications would do. It is very easy to say, as Mr. Ruthnaswamy just said, that what you want is one Member of Council in the Government of India who would co-ordinate Railways and Roads and so on. Mr. Ruthnaswamy must remember that roads are essentially a provincial subject; it is perfectly true that there are certain roads, strategic roads on the frontier, and others which fall under the Government of India; but the vast bulk of roads in India are roads which are under the superintendence of their own Local Governments and which must be under their superintendence. It is perfectly true that, in so far as any rate as this question of a Central Road Board is concerned, it was handed over to me to deal with in the Government of India mainly because as Commerce Member I am naturally more interested in all questions of transport than any other Member of the Government of India, and I did agree, as Mr. Ruthnaswamy truly said, that we would consider very carefully the question of opening a Road Board in India, but in my speech in that other place to which the Honourable Member referred, I made it very very clear that before we could do anything in that matter we should have to consult Local Governments very carefully because we

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did feel that we were encroaching upon their subject. Then again, I do not suppose that even Mr. Neogy will seriously pretend that there is any very real or immediate connection between Civil Aviation and Railways, or that there is any particular reason why the Member in charge of Railways should also be in charge of Civil Aviation. I would like the House to believe that in distributing the portfolios among the Members of Council the Governor General had merely got in mind the most convenient method of transacting the business of his Council. The Governor General knows more or less the amount of work which each subject gives and he has tried to distribute those subjects among the different Members in order to give them all just that amount of work which they can properly do, observing as far as possible a logical sort of connection between the various subjects allotted to a Member. I hold myself quite definitely that the present arrangement of portfolios is the right one. Nobody, I think, will deny that Commerce in every point almost touches Railways. I have to deal not only with Railways and Commerce but also with Ports; I have also to deal with Shipping and Navigation and in so far as this question of a Central Road Board is concerned that also comes to me. The only point in which the present organisation differs from the proposed Department of Communications is that I have not got to deal with Posts and Telegraphs and I have not got to deal with Civil Aviation; but I believe that the House on reflection will see that we have carried out in the spirit, if not in the letter, the idea of having Ministry of Communications and that there is no real reason why this cut should be passed, because I do not believe that anybody in this House will hold seriously that there is any very intimate connection between Posts and Telegraphs and Civil Aviation on the one hand and Railways, Roads, Ports and Shipping on the other. Sir, I oppose the motion.

Mr. President: The question is

“That the Demand under the head ‘Indian Postal and Telegraph Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs 100.”

The motion was negatived

Telegraph Censorship.

Mr. K. C. Roy: Sir, I move my motion No. 63, that the Demand under the head “Indian Postal and Telegraph Department” be reduced by one rupee. Only the other day this House had the opportunity of hearing about the telegraph censorship arising out of the Khargpur strike. On that day the Home Member as well as the Member for Industry and Labour made their position clear. When I read the speeches I felt I was not quite dissatisfied. I do not know, Sir, the effect of the speeches in the House. The telegraph censor exercises his authority under section 5 of the Indian Telegraph Act. I shall read this section for the information of the House.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: On a point of order, Sir, if my Honourable friend is referring to a section of the Indian Telegraph

Act, is not this a matter involving legislation and therefore not open to discussion at this stage?

Mr. K. C. Roy: Might I point out, Sir, that I am not discussing legislation? I am discussing the conditions under which the telegraph censor works. The section runs as follows

“ On the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interests of the public safety, Local Government or any other officer specially appointed in this behalf by the Governor General in Council may—

(b) order that any message or class of messages to or from any person or class of persons or relating to any particular subject, brought for transmission by, or transmitted or received by, any telegraph, shall not be transmitted, or shall be intercepted or detained, or shall be disclosed to the Government or an officer thereof mentioned in the order.

(2) If any doubt arises as to the existence of a public emergency, or whether any act done under sub-section (1) was in the interest of the public safety, a certificate signed by a Secretary to the Government of India or to the Local Government shall be conclusive proof on the point ”

The House will note that this section contemplates ‘ any public emergency or in the interests of the public safety’. But, Sir, Honourable Members will remember that during the last few months there has been no emergency and no occasion has arisen for the declaration of an emergency or for the detention of telegrams in the interests of public safety. But, Sir, what has happened? A number of telegrams have been detained, and from my own experience I may tell the House that a number of telegrams sent to us by various newspaper correspondents have been either suppressed or detained.

Then, Sir, I come to the statutory rule under this section. The wording of the statutory rule runs as follows—

“ Telegraph offices are required to refuse to accept any telegrams which may be of a decidedly objectionable or alarming character.”

I claim, Sir, here that the telegraph authority receives a sort of permanent right to refuse or detain telegrams, and I claim, Sir, that these statutory rules are not in consonance with the section in the Indian Telegraph Act. I would, therefore, like to suggest to my Honourable friend, Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra, who rose to a point of order to shut me up, to examine the legal position and take the advice of the Law Officers of the Crown.

I now come to the administration of the censorship. Every telegraphist is a potential censor, whether he is in a village telegraph office or at a head office, whether in any province or on the frontier, and in my opinion his word is by often the last word on the subject. I will give the House an experience of my own which took place only a few weeks ago. I had a very important communication from one of the departments of the Government of India, which I had transmitted to Calcutta and Madras. The Central Telegraph Office here was good enough to transmit it, but it was challenged by the Telegraph Master at Madras. The message came back to Delhi, and it was communicated to a local authority, and he held that the Telegraph Master at Madras was right. The communication was sent to me by no less a person than the head of a department of the Government of India. The telegram was sent on Friday night; Saturday passed, and Sunday passed, and I was informed about it on Monday afternoon. I at once

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brought this matter to the notice of the Government of India, and I am glad to say that the Home Department lost no time in setting the matter right. I should therefore like to ask my Honourable friend Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra to review the present position and issue sensible circulars. We newspaper men feel it as a public grievance that the statutory rules of the telegraph guide have been very badly misused. Sir, I move my motion.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly : Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I desire to support my friend Mr. K. C. Roy. I can give any number of instances in which the stoppage of messages by telegraph offices has resulted in the abstraction of very valuable news to newspapers, but I do not propose to waste the time of the House at this time of the day. I will only give one instance when Mrs. Besant was interned at Ootacamund. She generally used to get her Marmite from the Army and Navy Stores in Bombay, and she sent up a telegram to the Stores to send her two jars of Marmite. (*Honourable Members*: "What is Marmite"?) It is a kind of marmalade, let us say. Or rather I am told it is a kind of substitute for butter. Anyhow it is eaten with bread. Then some telegraphic genius thought it was some kind of dynamite. And forthwith the telegram was suppressed and Mrs. Besant went without Marmite and had only plain bread for about a fortnight. Sir, this kind of thing ought not to go on, and I think it is the duty of the Telegraph Department to see that this section is not abused. I know of many cases in which there have been serious abuses. I purposely refrain from citing them to-day because I do not want to prolong the discussion but, Sir, it is an open scandal that newspapers are at the mercy of the telegraphist in respect of news which is most valuable to the public.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Sir, I had occasion to draw the attention of this House to the fact that a certain telegram addressed to some Honourable Members of this House had been censored and intercepted by the Telegraph Master at Khargpur during the recent strike there. On that occasion my Honourable friend Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra read out certain rules to this House to show that the telegraph authorities in the provinces were required to submit their telegrams, in cases where there was any question as to their character, to certain Executive authorities. Sir, I first of all want to know whether the rules that we find in this Post and Telegraph Manual are framed by virtue of any statutory authority which the Government of India have got. That is the first point I want information on. The second is, how is it that the published Manual which is available to the public does not contain the full instructions which were read out by my Honourable friend Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra? All that the published edition of the Manual says is that telegraph offices are required to refuse to accept any telegram which may be of a decidedly objectionable or alarming character. That is all that we get from the published edition of the Manual, but my Honourable friend went on reading—I do not know from where—something more which went to show that there are detailed instructions given to the Telegraph Masters in the mufassil for referring a certain class of telegrams to the district authorities. Sir, the only Act with regard to telegraphs is Act XIII of 1835 to which reference has already been made by my Honourable friend, Mr. K. C. Roy. Section 5 has already been read out to this House which gives power specifically to the Governor General or to the Local Government to take certain extraordinary measures

in connection with telegrams on the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interests of the public safety. The character of the emergency that is contemplated in that section is clear if we refer to sub-section (2) of that very section where it is laid down that, if any doubt arises as to the existence of a public emergency or where any act contained under sub-section (1) was in the interests of the public safety, a certificate signed by the Secretary to the Government of India or to the Local Government shall be conclusive proof of this point. This, I submit, contemplates a far graver emergency than a casual strike of railway hands at Khargpur. Then, Sir, section 7 of the Telegraph Act empowers the Governor General in Council to make rules consistent with this Act for the conduct of all or any telegraphs, established, maintained or worked by the Government. I do not know whether it is the contention of my Honourable friend, Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra, that the rules that we find in the Postal Manual are framed by virtue of the rule-making power given to the Governor General in Council under section 7 of the Telegraph Act. But, Sir, if he holds that position, then may I point out to him that the rules must not be inconsistent with the provisions of the Telegraph Act? As I have already stated, the provisions of section 5 contemplate a grave emergency, an emergency which might justify Government, in times of war, for instance, or any civil commotion in the country, in assuming censorship of telegrams. That justification cannot certainly be pleaded on the occasion of any casual strike as happened the other day at Khargpur. Sir, if my Honourable friend's contention is that the rules, as we find them in the Postal Manual, are not framed by virtue of the rule-making authority under section 7 of the Telegraph Act, then I should like to know whether it is permissible for Government to extend the provisions of a Statute by making rules and publishing them in a departmental manual. It is a very serious question and I should like Government to give a considered reply.

Mr. Arthur Moore (Bengal: European): Sir, I should like to support as strongly as possible the motion of my Honourable friend to call attention to this matter. I do not think, Sir, that anybody who has any responsibility in connection with newspapers would object to a censorship in regard to certain matters, but we do say that if there is to be a censorship, let us have a co-ordinated system and a proper authority. Can anything be more ludicrous than that a communication sent out by one of the most serious-minded Departments of this Government, the Foreign and Political Department, should be held up by a telegraphist in Madras as unfit for publication (*Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney*: "No".) and that the communication should be freely published in some parts of the country but that some telegraphist, because he thought it was not fit for publication and that the Foreign Secretary had made a mistake, should refuse the people of Madras that information? We had another instance the other day in connection with the despatch of troops for China. That information was known to a considerable number of journalists in this country and they naturally communicated it to their papers. In some instances the telegraphists queried that communication and raised the point, and telegrams were held up for several days and the reason given was not that there was any important military interest whatever at stake but the perfectly trivial reason that the Government had said that they did not wish the statement of His Excellency the Viceroy in this House at the opening of the Assembly to be anticipated. But it was anticipated in Bombay, it was anticipated in

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Lahore and it was anticipated in several other places; yet in certain towns it was not allowed to be anticipated. Sir, this is an obviously absurd system and I think my friend has done an excellent service in calling the attention of the House to it, and I hope that the Government will give it their serious attention.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: I am sorry that this is the first occasion on which this particular instance, which seems to have caused a certain amount of inconvenience to my Honourable friends in this House who represent the Press, has been brought to my notice. That being the position, it is not possible for me to explain to the House the precise circumstances which led to that particular action on the part of the telegraphist. The rules under which telegrams are withheld are made by the Governor General in Council under section 7 of the Telegraph Act, XIII of 1885. They have been published in the Gazette of India. These are not reproduced in complete form in the Guide to which reference was made by my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy, for that Guide contains information which is of use to the public. It does not certainly include the whole of the information which is for the use of the officers of the Department.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: That is confidential.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: As I told the Honourable Member the other day the rules are published in the Gazette of India and therefore every member of the public has an opportunity of studying them and knowing what is there in them. They are not reproduced in full in the Telegraph Guide for the simple reason that if every statutory notification were to appear there we should have a very bulky book. The cost of printing would certainly go up and the information would not be of any great value to the public at large. In fact the rules were published for the last time in the Department of Industries and Labour notification No. 40, dated the 21st December 1926. That was quite recently and I am rather surprised to find that it escaped the attention of my Honourable friend from Bengal. At the same time, my Honourable friend Mr. Roy has brought to notice certain facts connected with the administration of the rules by the subordinates of the Telegraph Department and I shall certainly have the matter properly looked into.

Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar: Will the Honourable Member examine the rules and see if they are in conformity with the law?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: All I can say is that these rules were carefully examined by our Legislative Department, who are our legal pundits, before they were issued; and I am very doubtful if that Department made a slip in passing these rules and did not examine that they were in consonance with section 7 of the Telegraph Act. However, if it will satisfy my Honourable friend if I were to have the matter further looked into by these experts, I shall most certainly do so.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Indian Postal and Telegraph Department' be reduced by Re. 1."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—44.

Abdul Latif Saheb Farookhi, Mr.
Abdul Matin Chaudhury, Maulvi.
Abdullah Haji Kasim, Khan Bahadur
Haji.

Aney, Mr. M. S.
Bhargava, Pandit Thakur Das.
Chetty, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham.
Cocke, Mr. H. G.
Das, Mr. B.
Dutt, Mr. Amar Nath.
Gavin-Jones, Mr. T.
Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Raja.
Gidney, Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J.
Goswami, Mr. T. C.
Gulab Singh, Sardar.
Haji, Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand.
Hussain Shah, Sayyed.
Iyengar, Mr. A. Rangaswami.
Jayakar, Mr. M. R.
Jinnah, Mr. M. A.
Joshi, Mr. N. M.
Khin Maung, U.
Kunzru, Pandit Hirday Nath.
Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. Dharendra
Kanta.

Lajpat Rai, Lala.
Mehta, Mr. Jammadas M.
Mohammad Ismail Khan, Haji
Chaudhury.
Moonje, Dr. B. S.
Moore, Mr. Arthur.
Mukhtar Singh, Mr.
Neogy, Mr. K. C.
Pandya, Mr. Vidya Sagar.
Prakasam, Mr. T.
Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Sir.
Rahimtulla, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim.
Rajan Bakhsh Shah, Khan Bahadur
Makhdum Syed.
Rao, Mr. G. Sarvotham.
Roy, Mr. K. C.
Roy, Rai Bahadur Tarit Bhūsan.
Ruthnaswamy, Mr. M.
Sassoon, Sir Victor.
Singh, Mr. Gaya Prasad.
Singh, Mr. Ram Narayan.
Tok Kyi, U.
Vishindas, Mr. Harchandrai.

NOES—39.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian.
Abdul Qaiyum, Nawab Sir Sahibzada.
Akram Hussain Bahadur, Prince
A. M. M.
Allison, Mr. F. W.
Anwar-ul-Azim, Mr.
Ashrafuddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur
Nawabzada Sayid.
Ayyangar, Mr. V. K. A. Aravamudha.
Ayyangar, Rao Bahadur Narasimha
Gopalaswami.
Bhore, Mr. J. W.
Blackett, The Honourable Sir Basil.
Coatman, Mr. J.
Dalal, Sir Bomanji.
Donovan, Mr. J. T.
Dunnett, Mr. J. M.
E'jaz Rasul Khan, Raja Muhammad.
Graham, Mr. L.
Greenfield, Mr. H. C.
Haigh, Mr. P. B.
Hezlett, Mr. J.
Howell, Mr. E. B.

Innes, The Honourable Sir Charles.
Jawahir Singh, Sardar Bahadur
Sardar.
Kabul Singh Bahadur, Risaldar-Major
and Honorary Captain.
Keane, Mr. M.
Lamb, Mr. W. S.
Macphail, The Rev. Dr. E. M.
Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra
Nath.
Muddiman, The Honourable Sir
Alexander.
Nasir-ud-din Ahmad, Khan Bahadur.
Paddison, Sir George.
Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
Rajah, Rao Bahadur M. C.
Rau, Mr. H. Shankar.
Roy, Sir Ganen.
Singh, Rai Bahadur S. N.
Sykes, Mr. E. F.
Tonkinson, Mr. H.
Willson, Sir Walter.
Young, Mr. G. M.

The motion was adopted.

Press Telephone Rates.

Mr. K. G. Roy: Sir, I move that the Demand under the head "Indian Postal and Telegraph Department" be reduced by Re. 1.

Sir, the House will, I hope, give me the indulgence of mentioning another Press grievance. When the Bombay-Delhi telephone system was introduced, the Honourable Sir Ganen Roy, the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs, had a conference with the representatives of the

[Mr. K. C. Roy.]

Press, and there we discussed the question of special Press rates for telephones; but when the actual tariff came out, there was no Press rate in it, and we are at the present moment paying for a three minutes' talk with Bombay Rs. 5. The poor press man, Sir, can hardly afford it. Poorer still are the newspaper owners, and they also cannot afford it. I mention this matter only with a view to obtaining an assurance from the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs that he will review the present position and reconsider the matter.

Sir Ganen Roy (Director General, Posts and Telegraphs): Sir, (Cheers) as regards the Press concession rates the matter is under consideration. We are first developing the trunk system between Delhi and Bombay and Delhi and Calcutta. Instead of Rs. 7-8, Sir, we are charging them about Rs. 5 for a call between Calcutta and Delhi and Delhi and Bombay; and the revision of these rates will be considered later on when we know exactly how many calls we are likely to get.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That the Demand under the head ‘Indian Postal and Telegraph Department’ be reduced by Re. 1.”

The motion was negatived.

Cable and Inland Press Rates.

Mr. K. C. Roy: Sir, I move that the Demand under the head “Indian Postal and Telegraph Department” be reduced by Re. 1.

This matter also refers to a Press grievance. The Empire Press Conference has made repeated representations to His Majesty's Government on the reduction of cable rates. We in India are equally anxious that there should be a reduction of cable rates between India and the United Kingdom; but we are more interested in the reduction of our inland Press rates. We consider the present rate excessive and it compares very unfavourably with the rates introduced by Lord Curzon. Speaking from foreign experience, I can tell the House that the South African Parliament has a special rate for the transmission of proceedings of the South African Parliament. I want Sir Ganen Roy to consider the matter and give us concessions for transmission of the proceedings of this House. I hope he will consider the matter and give us a reply.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, I rise to give my whole-hearted support to my old teacher and I do not follow in the footsteps of those Madras Members who do not follow in the foot-steps of their own teacher, Dr. Macphail. But, Sir, at the same time in giving my whole-hearted support to this cut, I beg also to give, if I have the right to do so as an old pupil, some advice that the Press should not be so partial to the Government as it has been previously. With these few words, I beg to support the motion.

The Honourable Sir Bhyppendra Nath Mitra: Sir, I much regret I am unable to give any assurance to my friend, the Honourable Mr. K. C. Roy, in regard to this matter. As it is, we give a considerable amount of concession to the Press and this results in a certain amount of sacrifice of revenue. Consistently with what I told this House earlier to-day, it is impossible for me to make any reductions in these Press rates with the

object of giving further concessions to the Press. Any such action will increase the deficit in the account of the Indian Postal and Telegraph Department, and it will reduce the sums available to me for the various purposes which I mentioned earlier in this debate. I leave it to the Members of this House to decide which is more desirable, the objects that I have already placed before them or greater concessions to the Press in any direction.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That the Demand under the ‘Indian Postal and Telegraph Department’ be reduced by Re. 1.”

The motion was negatived.

Posting of Telegrams.

Mr. K. C. Roy: Sir, I propose the reduction of another rupee under the head “Indian Postal and Telegraph Department”.

This is about the posting of telegrams. The House has already heard of the existence of the Indian Telegraph Act and the Indian Telegraph Guide, but they have not heard of another publication of the Postal Department called the Manual. I think this is a pure departmental publication, and in that Manual there is a section to the effect that when there is congestion of traffic the Telegraph Master is authorised to post telegrams. Perhaps this rule was drawn up in the early days of the East India Company. It has been allowed to remain on where it was. But of course this obnoxious clause is very much in force. During Christmas week there was a complete breakdown of telegraph service from Calcutta to North India and I think posting was freely resorted to. I certainly object on the principle of public morality to the posting of telegrams for which the sender has paid full telegraph rates, and I claim, Sir, that under normal conditions when the Telegraph Department is not in a position to transmit telegrams by telegraph wires, they ought to return them to the senders or refund their money. I commend this motion to the House.

Sir Ganen Roy: The posting of telegrams has to be done during the interruption of the lines or during the time when the lines are congested and telegrams cannot be disposed of. In this particular case there was a heavy congestion at Gauhati during the Congress festivities, and there were many correspondents sending the same message about ten times over and we had not sufficient facilities; in fact we did not know that there would be such severe congestion. (*An Honourable Member:* “Why did you not know?”) Because we could not get information from anybody. (*An Honourable Member:* “This was the 41st Congress!”) We tried our very best to cope with the traffic and as far as that was concerned, I think it was very well disposed of. This I consider is a censure on the Department, which, considering the work the Department did for the Press, I think is undeserved.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That the Demand under the head ‘Indian Postal and Telegraph Department’ be reduced by Re. 1.”

The Assembly divided.

AYES—47.

Abdul Latif Saheb Farookhi, Mr.
Abdul Matin Chaudhury, Maulvi.
Abdullah Haji Kasim, Khan Bahadur
Haji.

Acharya, Mr. M. K.
Aiyangar, Mr. C. Duraiswamy.
Aney, Mr. M. S.
Bhargava, Pandit Thakur Das.
Chaman Lall, Mr.
Chetty, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham.
Das, Mr. B.
Dutt, Mr. Amar Nath.
Dutta, Mr. Srish Chandra.
Gavin-Jones, Mr. T.
Ghuznavi, Mr. A. H.
Goswami, Mr. T. C.
Gulab Singh, Sardar.
Haji, Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand.
Hussain Shah, Sayyed.
Jayakar, Mr. M. R.
Jogiah, Mr. Varahagiri Venkata.
Joshi, Mr. N. M.
Khin Maung, U.
Kunzru, Pandit Hirday Nath.
Lajpat Rai, Lala.
Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan.

Misra, Mr. Dwarka Prasad.
Mohammad Ismail Khan, Haji
Chaudhury.
Moonje, Dr. B. S.
Muhammad Nawaz Khan, Lieut.-
Sardar.
Mukhtar Singh, Mr.
Murtuza Saheb Bahadur, Maulvi
Sayyid.
Naidu, Mr. B. P.
Neogy, Mr. K. C.
Prakasam, Mr. T.
Rahimtulla, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim.
Rajan Bakhsh Shah, Khan Bahadur
Makhdum Syed.
Ranga Iyer, Mr. C. S.
Roy, Mr. K. C.
Roy, Rai Bahadur Tarit Bhusan.
Ruthnaswamy, Mr. M.
Sarda, Rai Sahib Harbilas.
Sassoon, Sir Victor.
Singh, Mr. Ram Narayan.
Sinha, Kumar Ganganand.
Suhrawardy, Dr. A.
Tok Kyi, U.
Vishindas, Mr. Harchandrai.

NOES—43.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian.
Abdul Qaiyum, Nawab Sir Sahibzada.
Akram Hussain Bahadur, Prince
A. M. M.
Allison, Mr. F. W.
Ashrafuddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur
Nawabzada Sayid.
Ayangar, Mr. V. K. A. Aravamudha.
Ayyangar, Rao Bahadur Narasimha
Gopalaswami.
Bhore, Mr. J. W.
Blackett, The Honourable Sir Basil.
Coatman, Mr. J.
Cocke, Mr. H. G.
Crawford, Colonel J. D.
Dalal, Sir Bomanji.
Donovan, Mr. J. T.
Dunnett, Mr. J. M.
E'jaz Rasul Khan, Raja Muhammad.
Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Raja.
Graham, Mr. L.
Greenfield, Mr. H. C.
Haigh, Mr. P. B.
Hezlett, Mr. J.
Howell, Mr. E. B.

Innes, The Honourable Sir Charles.
Jawahir Singh, Sardar Bahadur
Sardar.
Kabul Singh Bahadur, Risaldar-Major
and Honorary Captain.
Keane, Mr. M.
Lamb, Mr. W. S.
Lindsay, Sir Darcy.
Macphail, The Rev. Dr. E. M.
Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra
Nath.
Moore, Mr. Arthur.
Muddiman, The Honourable Sir
Alexander.
Nasir-ud-din Ahmad, Khan Bahadur.
Paddison, Sir George.
Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
Rajah, Rao Bahadur M. C.
Rau, Mr. H. Shankar.
Roy, Sir Ganen.
Singh, Rai Bahadur S. N.
Sykes, Mr. E. F.
Tonkinson, Mr. H.
Willson, Sir Walter.
Young, Mr. G. M.

The motion was adopted.

Indo-Ceylon Cables.

Mr. K. C. Roy: Sir I propose a cut of another rupee. (Hear, hear).

I wish to bring to the notice of this House that the Government of India have two short cables between India and Ceylon. These two cables

are very old and hardly fit for use. In consequence there are considerable mutilations and interruptions. When we approach the Ceylon Government, they say go to the Government of India, and when we go to the Government of India, they say go to the Ceylon Government. We have, therefore, Sir, very wisely decided to bring the matter to the notice of this House. I therefore suggest that the Director General will be in a position to give us an assurance that he will look into the Indo-Ceylon

5 P.M. cables at a very early date. Before I resume my seat, Sir, I wish to acknowledge publicly the consideration and assistance which we have always received from Sir Ganen Roy in the discharge of his high office. I think it is a duty that I owe to myself as well as to the other Members of this House. He will also find that the journalistic fraternity will miss him when he leaves India for England.

Mr. B. Das: May I enquire, Sir, whether the Honourable Member is speaking as a journalist or as Member of this House?

Mr. K. C. Roy: Both.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. K. C. Roy is not fully informed about the position in regard to the Indo-Ceylon cable. There are undoubtedly two cables, but one of these has got damaged with the result that for sometime we have been working with the help of only one cable. Steps have been taken to obtain 12 miles of new cable and it is expected that when the second or damaged cable has been brought up to a good condition, it will enable us to avoid the interruptions that may have occurred in the past.

Honourable Members: Withdraw!

Mr. K. C. Roy: Sir, I am prepared to withdraw.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Indian Postal and Telegraph Department' be reduced by Rs. 1."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: As the rest of the amendments on the paper are disposed of, the question I have to put is:

"That a reduced sum not exceeding Rs. 10,34,05,998 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1928, in respect of the 'Indian Postal and Telegraph Department'."

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday, the 12th March, 1927.

Copies of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly and of the Council of State are obtainable on sale from the Manager, Central Publication Branch, 8, Hastings Street, Calcutta.

